

BOOK BY BOOK

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Popular Studies on the Canon of Scripture

NEW TESTAMENT

BY

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PREFACE.

THESE studies by eminent divines originally appeared as Introductions to the various Books of Holy Scripture in "The New Illustrated Bible," published by Messrs. H. Virtue and Company, Limited. In 1892 they were issued under the title "Book by Book," and thus presented in a single volume a complete and scholarly survey of the questions affecting the Sacred Canon which have of recent years caused so much discussion.

In compliance with frequently expressed wishes it has now been decided to publish the work in two volumes. The present volume is devoted to the Books of the New Testament.

THE PUBLISHERS.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.*

The Problem of the Synoptic Gospels.—The first three Gospels present a problem which is believed to be unique in the history of literature. They are three biographies, which bear the names of different authors, which have each, so far as it can be traced, a separate and independent history, and which also in detail are marked by a number of substantial differences, and yet which at the same time agree together in a way that is so remarkable as evidently to need some special explanation. It is not only that the same incidents are chosen for narration, not only that they are narrated in what is frequently the same order—that order not being chronological—but also that the very words in which they are narrated are to a large extent identical. It is this extraordinary degree of resemblance which has given to the first three Gospels a name by which they are very commonly known—the Synoptic Gospels.

It has often been observed that, while the first three Gospels present all these numerous points of contact and coincidence, the fourth Gospel—though again not without such points of intimate relation—yet stands comparatively alone. And to distinguish

* Since this and the three following chapters were written, the criticism of the Synoptic Gospels appears to be entering upon a new phase. In several quarters at once there is a marked tendency, while accepting the main lines of an analysis similar to that which has been here given, to throw back the composition of the oldest form of Gospel (by some identified with the original "Oracles" of St. Matthew) to a date earlier than had hitherto been thought possible for it. The chief advocate of this view, Dr. Resch, in a work entitled "Agrapha," goes so far as to say that it is older than any of the extant books of the New Testament, and he contends that quotations were made from it not only in the earliest ecclesiastical literature, but throughout the New Testament itself, beginning with the First Epistle to Thessalonians, written about 52 A.D. It is probable that the arguments by which it is sought to prove this will be subject to considerable deductions, but they represent the fruit of twenty-five years' study, and cannot lightly be put aside.

them from it and bring out into clear relief this leading characteristic, a name has been coined from the Greek which means "capable of being seen in one view," or, as we might express it, "capable of arrangement in parallel columns."

It is well known that harmonies have frequently been attempted, both in English and in Greek, drawn up in this manner; among the best of which may be mentioned Robinson's "Harmony of the Four Gospels in Greek" (New York, 1845), with an English edition adapted from the work of the eminent American traveller and scholar; Fuller's "Harmony of the Gospels" (London, 1875), and Dr. E. A. Abbott's "Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels" (London, 1884). Literature does not contain another group of biographies which lends itself to such treatment in anything like the same degree.

The problem, however, consists not merely in the one relation of resemblance—which, if it stood alone, would not be so difficult to account for—but in the combined relation of resemblance and difference. The question is, what hypothesis will satisfactorily explain the phenomena, and explain them not only in general terms but when it comes to be applied in close detail?

It is practically agreed at the present time that the problem is a purely scientific one, and that it is not foreclosed by any theory of inspiration. Inspiration, as Christians are coming to see, is concerned with the substance of revelation rather than with its outward form. The very same inquiries which bring out the natural human element in Scripture, also show where that element ends. They point to causes at work which are rightly called not human, but in a special and peculiar sense Divine; and over and above this, the Christian will also believe in a Providence which shapes the ends and determines the course of all causes and operations, however indirectly associated with revelation; but this does not absolve him from the duty of seeking to trace the action of those causes by such methods as are alone open to him. He will write $\sigma\upsilon\nu\ \Theta\epsilon\acute{\omega}$, "under God," over every theory that he may be led to form; but subject to that reservation, the fact that a theory accounts (humanly speaking) for the facts, is enough to give it a legitimate place in the growing body of organised knowledge.

We ask, then, what account is to be given of the very remarkable phenomena at once of agreement and of difference which characterize the first three, or Synoptic Gospels? The really scientific discussion of the question may be said to be little more than a century old. In earlier ages (if we except some isolated expressions in the writings of the Fathers) a natural and laudable

but, as we have seen, mistaken instinct of reverence put a veto upon the inquiry before it was well begun. But within the last hundred years a very great amount of acumen and industry has been brought to bear upon it. Almost every conceivable hypothesis has been started, applied, and criticised; and though a general agreement has not yet been reached, and the difficulties are yet some way from being all removed, real progress has nevertheless been made, and glimpses at least may be obtained of what promises to be a final solution.

To attempt to record all, or even any considerable part, of the hypotheses that have been raised, would only leave upon the reader's mind an impression of infinite confusion. It will therefore be best to select just a few salient or representative theories, which either have in the past attracted, or at present attract, the greatest amount of attention. These may be said to be: (1) The theory that after the writing of Gospels had once begun, the succeeding evangelists each made use of the work of his predecessor or predecessors. This we will call the theory of *successive dependence*. (2) The theory that all three Gospels alike are based upon a common foundation of tradition, more or less fixed in its form, though committed to writing for the first time in our present Gospels. This we will call the theory of *oral tradition*. (3) The theory that the Gospels derive their common element not merely from their dependence upon a common tradition, but from the common use of certain written documents. This we will call the theory of *documentary sources*.

In attempting to understand and to estimate each of these three hypotheses, it will be well to bear constantly in mind the conditions of the problem which we have to solve: viz., the combined presence of resemblance and of difference, and that no solution can be successful which does not account for both at once, and which does not show itself capable of being carried into detail.

1. *The Theory of Successive Dependence*.—This is the oldest theory. It goes back as far as to St. Augustine, who thinks that the Evangelists were acquainted with each other's writings, and were inspired in some respects to supplement them. Thus, in the genealogies, while St. Matthew gives the descent of the Saviour in the royal line, that of Solomon, St. Luke gives the priestly descent, or that which is not royal, through Nathan. St. Mark he regards as simply the abbreviator of St. Matthew. (*De Cons. Ev.* i. 2, § 4). But St. Augustine spares himself the necessity of grappling with the difficulties of this view by confining its expression to a few very general sentences, and by making no attempt to explain in detail why the later writers

made so many changes in the text of the earlier, why they modified, transposed, and omitted, as they have done.

(i.) Here lies the great difficulty which always has accompanied and always must accompany the theory of successive dependence. It imposes upon its holders the necessity of accounting for all the multitude of variations, great and small, in the three Gospels. The coincidences are accounted for easily enough, but to account for the differences is no such easy matter. Whatever is supposed to have been the order of succession, the difficulty remains the same.

Perhaps the commonest assumption is that to which we have just been referring in St. Augustine, that St. Matthew preceded St. Mark, and that they both preceded St. Luke. This has in its favour the traditional order of the Gospels—which is, however, not a primitive order, but one which came to be more and more adopted from the fourth century onwards. This at once raises the question, why did not St. Mark follow more closely in the footsteps of his predecessor? As compared with St. Matthew two things strike us about St. Mark; the one is the omission of a number of incidents and sayings; the other is the tendency to amplify the details of those which remain. In the common sections, St. Mark is nearly always the fuller of the two; but, taken as a whole, his Gospel is the shorter—and it is made shorter by the excision of much that is found in St. Matthew.

Whence these amplifications? and whence these excisions? The tendencies to which they point seem to be rather contradictory to each other. But, in any case, it is extremely hard to supply a motive for them in detail. In one respect, the difficulty is lightened if St. Luke is put before St. Mark. We might then suppose that St. Mark (or the author of the second Gospel, for those who hold this view usually regard the author as anonymous) obtained his greater fulness by combining the expressions used by the two previous Evangelists.

But this recondite process of dovetailing the language of two separate documents is seen, when it comes to be examined, to be, in a high degree, artificial and improbable. And even if it were not so, just in proportion as the one difficulty was lightened the other difficulty would be increased. We should then have all the narratives and sayings in St. Luke added to those in St. Matthew, and we should have to explain how it was that St. Mark came to be so much shorter than either of them. The same kind of perplexities pursue us whatever hypothesis we have recourse to. If we put St. Mark first on the list, or St. Luke, their incidence may vary somewhat, but their amount is not diminished.

(ii.) It is true that one systematic attempt has been made to supply a motive for the variations in the Synoptic Gospels—the attempt connected with the name of Dr. Ferdinand Christian Baur (died 1860), a writer distinguished as much for width of view and command of daring hypothesis as for lucidity of exposition. The key to unlock the intricacies of the problem he found in the *party leanings* of the authors of the Gospels.

Parties certainly there were in the Apostolic age as much as in any subsequent period of the Church's history; and no one has ever brought out their significance more clearly than Baur did. At the root of them all was the great division of Jew and Gentile. Converts from Judaism and converts from Gentile heathenism came to Christianity with such very different antecedents that it was impossible that they should at once see eye to eye with one another. Most of all was this rendered impossible by the fact that the Jew regarded himself as occupying an altogether higher platform than the Gentile; the Gentiles were described by the sweeping designation of "sinners" (Gal. ii. 15); the Jew was a member of the chosen people, heir to all the promises.

The two bodies had this much in common, that both confessed Jesus to be the Messiah; but that left a number of questions still open. On what terms were Gentiles to be admitted? The Mosaic law had not been formally abrogated. What degree of compliance with that law was to be required of them? We cannot fail to see that questions like these left room for great differences of opinion. Such differences no doubt existed, from the extremes of strictness and exclusiveness among the partisans of Judaism, to the extremes of laxity and latitudinarianism in the converts from heathen religions.

Between these extremes there were a number of intermediate positions of which many traces have come down to us in the pages of the Acts and in the Epistles of St. Paul. Much lively controversy, much open antagonism, split up the Church into sections as widely separated from each other as any that exist in our own day. What wonder if they also left their mark upon the composition of the Gospels?

(iii.) There was a good *primâ-facie* case for looking for the indications of party influence. As far back as the second century St. Matthew's Gospel had been regarded as in a special sense the Gospel of the Jews, and St. Luke's as in a special sense the Gospel of the Gentiles; while St. Mark, the associate at once of St. Paul and St. Peter, seemed to stand half-way between the other two. Baur took hold of these admitted facts and developed them with great subtlety and acumen. By means of them he sought to explain the deviations of the evangelical writers from

each other as due to the desire (conscious or unconscious, but for the most part conscious) to give effect to their own sympathies and antipathies.

The Particularist author of the first Gospel laid stress on the fulfilment of prophecy, on the observance of the Jewish law, on the privileges and claims of Israel, on the "holy city," Jerusalem, and the like. The Universalist author of the third Gospel preached a doctrine almost like that of St. Paul, a doctrine of free forgiveness extended to the outcast and undeserving, not confined to the Jews, but open to the Samaritan and even to the Gentile; sayings like that relating to the permanence of the Mosaic law were quietly dropped; the gap which separated the Old Dispensation from the New was widened. The first and the third Gospels thus stood opposed to each other; the function of the second Gospel was that of mediation and conciliation. A phrase was omitted here, another was softened there, so as to avoid offending the susceptibilities of either party, and to promote that policy of union or fusion on which was to be built the structure of the Catholic Church.

(iv.) Even so, the problem with which Baur and his followers had to deal was not a simple one. The phenomena were not all of one kind. It was true that Particularist expressions might be quoted from St. Matthew, and Universalist expressions from St. Luke, but the parts were sometimes interchanged. St. Matthew spoke of many coming from the east and from the west and sitting down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom were cast into outer darkness (Matt. viii. 11, 12). It is he who records the threat that the Kingdom of God should be taken away from the Jews and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matt. xxi. 43); he who commemorates the curse which the Jews invoke upon themselves and upon their children (Matt. xxvii. 25); and he finally who alone gives the express command to "make disciples of every nation" (Matt. xxvii. 19).

On the other hand, St. Luke contains even more allusions than St. Matthew to the ardent expectations among the Jews at the time of Christ's birth: "Looking for the consolation of Israel," "for the redemption of Jerusalem," "for the kingdom of God," "restoring the kingdom to Israel," are his phrases and not St. Matthew's (Luke ii. 25, 38; xxiii. 51; cf. Acts i. 6); it is he and not St. Matthew who speaks of the "daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound" (Luke xiii. 16), and of scrupulous observers of the law like Zacharias and Simeon (Luke i. 6; ii. 25).

(v.) It was not easy to fit these diverse tendencies into the same framework. The Gospels could not be treated as indivisible

wholes; they were not all of a piece. The dependence of one upon the other could not be a dependence of the complete Gospels as they have come down to us. A process of dissection began, in which the dividing lines were drawn by the tendency observable in the different portions. We must not attempt to follow all the speculative results of this dissecting process. A prominent part in it was played by two rather shadowy documents of which mention was made by early writers: one was the so-called Gospel according to the Hebrews, the other was a peculiar abridgment of St. Luke said to have been used by the Gnostic Marcion.

A Gospel according to the Hebrews would naturally represent the earliest stage of evangelical composition. At the opposite pole to this would naturally be the work approved by one who accepted only the writings of St. Paul, and hated everything that savoured of Judaism. Given these two documents, it would not be difficult to conceive how they might be built up into our present Gospels by gradual accretions and modifications. For such a process time was necessary; and the Tübingen School, as it was called, from its headquarters in the University of Tübingen where Baur was professor, did not hesitate to draw freely upon time. It supposed that the Synoptic Gospels did not reach their present shape until the period 130—170 A.D., when the unmistakable allusions to them first begin.

(vi.) We must not stay to point out the impossibilities in this construction of history. An alternative scheme, which seeks to evade those impossibilities, will be presented shortly. Enough to remark that the theory is no longer that of "successive dependence." It has become a form of the theory of "documentary sources," in which the leading feature is that the modifications introduced into those sources are supposed to be due to the dogmatic leanings of the writers, who one after another reviewed and recast them.

(vii.) The theory so conceived was far too one-sided to account for the facts. On the one hand, it led to many strained and far-fetched interpretations. Dogmatic leanings were suspected everywhere, not only in places which really involved doctrine, but in others which were guiltless of any such intention. The Evangelists were transformed from chroniclers not devoid of art of a simple, Oriental, or Hellenistic kind, into nineteenth-century pamphleteers; or rather pamphleteers whose recondite, indirect, and allusive style of recommending their doctrines was that of no century whatever.

The perversion arose from attempting to make a single cause do duty for a number of causes. It was natural that the writers

or compilers of our Gospels should be influenced by their attitude towards the leading questions of their own day. A certain proportion of the variations in the Gospels can be accounted for in this manner, but by no means all of them. The critic must keep his eye open to all the influences at work, and must not allow himself to lay an exaggerated stress upon one to the exclusion of the rest.

(viii.) The theory of Baur was, as we have seen, the most elaborate attempt to explain the variations in the Gospels, on the hypothesis of the successive dependence of one upon the other or others. Even it did not represent that hypothesis in a pure form. The truth was, that it was beset by such fundamental difficulties, that as soon as it came to be applied in detail it was seen to be impossible. The hypothesis of the general dependence of the successive Gospels upon each other is now nearly extinct, if not quite. Even in the qualified form in which it was held by the Tübingen critics, it has been for some time on the decline. It has met with the fate of many other theories. The elements of truth in it have been absorbed in the common stock of knowledge, while its own adherents have borrowed freely from rival systems.

(ix.) There is just one modified application of the dependence-theory which still retains its vitality. Of recent years there has been a growing tendency among some leading critics to believe that St. Luke had before him the works of both his predecessors. This, however, is combined with a form of the documentary hypothesis: although these critics assume that St. Luke had access to our present Gospel of St. Matthew, they only suppose him to have made a quite subordinate and subsidiary use of it. The real foundation of St. Luke's Gospel they regard as laid in other documents, but they think that the Evangelist either occasionally glanced into the finished work that has come down to us, or at least had seen it and was affected by his recollection of it.

2. *The Hypothesis of Oral Tradition.*—The inherent and insuperable objection to the dependence-theory is that, while it accounts readily enough for the resemblances of the three Gospels to each other, it does not account, and really makes it impossible to account, for their differences. The theory of oral tradition is just the opposite of this. It accounts for the differences. The question is, can it also account for the resemblances?

(i.) Of course, any theory as to the origin of the Gospels must start from oral tradition. "The Gospel," at first meant, not anything written, but preaching by word of mouth; it was the "glad tidings of good things." This oral teaching had too, at first, a

different content from our written Gospels. That Jesus of Nazareth was the long-expected Messiah ; that He was also in a wider sense the Son of God ; that He died for our sins ; that He rose again the third day ; that He would come a second time to judge the earth—were the propositions with which it was chiefly concerned.

These propositions are the basis of the body of theology in St. Paul's Epistles. We can see that they were the points on which he was in the habit of insisting ; but we can see further that they were no peculiar property of his, but that he shared them with the rest of the Apostles, and with all other Christian teachers. They are the hinges on which Christianity as a system of doctrine turns. He who could really take them into his heart and soul did not need to "know Christ after the flesh." And yet such more mundane knowledge could not but have the deepest interest and fascination for Christians. St. Paul was a believer of very exceptional mould. He was capable of embracing an abstraction with an intensity of fervour which few others could give. The mass of mankind craved for something concrete.

In order to become loyal subjects of the Messiah it was necessary that they should know what manner of man He was when He walked the earth. Only so could their full enthusiasm be called out. Nor were they more eager to hear than the Apostles and others who had actually companied with the Lord would be eager to teach. This would be especially the case in the mother church of Jerusalem, where the greater number of the Apostles and of the original disciples were gathered together, and where the Christian community were most settled and of longest standing. Here it was less necessary to "lay again the foundation" of moral and religious teaching. There would be time to enlarge more fully upon the details of the Lord's life. We can imagine how knots of interested listeners would collect round the members of that little company who had themselves seen the Lord, and heard and could repeat His words. Meantime they were in close and constant intercourse with each other. Particulars that were known to one would soon become the common property of all. So would gradually grow up a more or less fixed cycle of narration. The oft-told story would have a tendency to stereotype itself. The same incidents, the same sayings would find their way into it whoever was the narrator.

And all this would be oral. It was not the custom of the Jews to commit what they had to say to writing. A Rabbi discoursing and his pupils listening, was the established method of communicating knowledge. Nor were they attended by the shorthand

writer who figures so often in Greek and Roman reports. The Jew was constantly practising his memory, and to memory he trusted. The teachers who day after day rehearsed some portion or other of the sacred history, and the bystanders who carried away fragments of it, were only doing what their countrymen were in the habit of doing. Some would come and go; new converts would be made among the pilgrims who came up to the feasts; even the Apostles had their "circuits" and longer journeyings (Acts ix. 32; Gal. ii. 11; 1 Cor. ix. 5), and yet there would be a sufficient number of permanent residents to keep up the continuity of the narration, and to prevent it from wandering far from the type to which they were accustomed.

(ii.) There are then quite sufficient reasons for thinking that the Gospel story would not merely circulate in an indefinite variety of forms, but that it would crystallise after one particular pattern. And when the troubles which preceded the great catastrophe began to thicken, and the circle of the Apostles was broken up, and the Church received its warning to flee from the doomed city; when the conditions under which the oral narrative had taken shape were ceasing to exist, and the necessity arose for written documents, it was natural that those who undertook the composition of these documents should try to embody as much as they could of what had now become a recognised and standard type of narration.

(iii.) Such is the historical basis on which rests the theory of oral tradition. The common element in our three Gospels is accounted for by the fact that they all drew from the same tradition, while the variable element is only such as might be expected from the different positions of the different writers, and the special sources to which they each had access.

(iv.) There can be no doubt that the Gospels were composed under peculiar conditions, and conditions which prepare us for a greater amount of resemblance than would be usual in three independent biographies of the same person. But is this a quite adequate explanation of the degree and kind of resemblance which we actually find? Many eminent English scholars, and some foreign scholars, think that it is. We will not take upon ourselves to gainsay them; but it is at least right that the reader should realise the full extent of the phenomena which have to be accounted for.

It is not only that the same incidents are chosen for narration, and those incidents, as it would seem, a selection from a much larger mass, the rest of which is passed over in silence. There can be no question that our Lord wrought many miracles and

spoke many parables which have not been recorded. He reminded Chorazin and Bethsaida of the "mighty works" which had been done in them, yet no one of all those mighty works has found its way into the Gospels; but for this one sentence the very names of these cities, as scenes of His ministry, would be unknown. "How often," He says, had He tried to gather together the children of Jerusalem; yet so far as we can tell from any direct statement in the Synoptic Gospels, the occasion on which He said this was the first on which He had paid a visit to Jerusalem since His baptism. St. John, at the end of his Gospel, after he has himself largely supplemented the synoptic narrative, adds with a pardonable hyperbole, that so much still remained which Jesus did, that if it were all to be written down, "the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

These are only a few proofs among many, that the Synoptic Gospels omitted far more than they recorded; and yet the framework of the narrative is practically the same in all three; it consists very largely both of the same events and of the same discourses. This, however, is not all; not only is the selection of incidents fundamentally the same, but the order in which they are related has a like fundamental identity, and the words in which they are told remarkably agree.

(v.) The identity of order is somewhat disguised and only reveals itself to attentive study. If we wish to discover the succession of incidents which the three Evangelists had before them, we must look for it in St. Mark. It is true both St. Matthew and St. Luke diverge considerably from this, but a comparison of the three Gospels shows that where they do so it was for some special reason. In spite of their divergence it is clear that they were acquainted with St. Mark's order, and that they were content to follow it whenever it did not interfere with some peculiarity of structure of their own.

The Gospel of St. Mark may be divided into three sections, the first of which ends at iii. 6, the second at vi. 13, while the third extends from that point to xvi. 8, which forms the close of the Gospel in an important group of authorities. Now in the first of these sections St. Matthew diverges, but the order of St. Mark is substantially that of St. Luke; in the third section St. Luke diverges, but again St. Mark agrees substantially with St. Matthew. In the intervening section, iii. 7—vi. 13, the relations are not so consistent, but even here St. Mark is supported for three or four consecutive paragraphs at a time, first by one of the companion Gospels and then by the other. There could hardly be more satisfactory proof that the order of St.

Mark really underlies and is presupposed in the other two Gospels.

We can see, too, why they depart from it. It is characteristic of St. Matthew to group events and discourses. But between Matthew iii., where the threefold narrative begins, and the end of Matthew xiii., there are three such groups of discourse (the sermon on the Mount, the discourse at the sending out of the Apostles, and the collection of parables in chap. xiii.), and one group of representative incidents (those contained in Matthew viii., ix.). It is this massing of similar matter which causes St. Matthew to desert the common order. Again, the most distinctive feature in the Gospel of St. Luke is the "great insertion" (Luke ix. 51—xviii. 14). Such a wholesale importation into the text which the third Evangelist had before him naturally led to much dislocation. This and the special knowledge which St. Luke displays of matters relating to the court of the Herods, sufficiently account for the greater part of his divergence.

(vi.) The order of St. Mark is the fundamental order. If that order had simply followed the chronology of the events, that would not have been so very surprising. But those who have looked into the matter agree that though St. Mark retains, roughly speaking, the outline of our Lord's ministry, his order is yet not entirely chronological. There is an element of artificial combination about it as well. Can we think that so fixed and peculiar an order as this would be given merely by oral tradition? Is it not the more probable view that the first and the third Evangelists had before them something like it in writing?

(vii.) If we lean to that conclusion, we shall see a confirmation of it in the verbal coincidences between the three Gospels. The extent of these coincidences may be seen set forth with great exactness in Mr. Rushbrook's sumptuous "Synopticon" (London, 1880—81). It has been calculated that the Gospel of St. Mark contains in all 11,158 words. Of these no less than 6,618 are common to one or both of the other two Gospels. More exactly, 2,651 are found in all three Gospels, 2,793 in St. Mark and St. Matthew, 1,174 in St. Mark and St. Luke.* Is that a proportion which we should expect to exist in three independent biographies, no matter how closely connected by common matter? Here again, too, we observe that the coincidences do not occur at random, but that St. Mark is the meeting-point of the other two Gospels as regards diction, just as he is the meeting-point between them as regards order. Once more the relation between

* Schaff, "History of the Christian Church," i. 596. f New York, 1882.

the threefold narratives appears to require some more tangible explanation than that supplied by oral tradition. It seems to conduct us up to a written source or sources.

(viii.) We may add to this another objection. The advocates of oral tradition invariably and naturally look to Jerusalem as the home of that tradition. Is it not then strange that it should say so little about the work of our Lord at Jerusalem? Here is a tradition which is supposed to have been formed and circulated for some forty years at Jerusalem, and yet its contents are almost entirely taken up, not with those visits to Jerusalem of which St. John has so much to say, but with the ministry in Galilee. Are these two things easily reconcilable? It does not seem so.

3. *The Hypothesis of Documentary Sources.*—On the continent of Europe, and especially in Germany, the theory that our first three Gospels are derived from some common source or sources has been most in favour of recent years. It seems beforehand to hold out a better prospect than either of the competing theories can do, of doing justice to both sides of the problem. The coincidences, whether of selection, of order, or of expression, are at once naturally and simply accounted for if a common document or documents lie at the base of all three Gospels. Nor do the differences cause any real difficulty if we allow (1) for the possession by each Evangelist of some special sources of information besides those which he has in conjunction with his fellows, and (2) for the natural idiosyncrasies of style and mode of treatment.

(i.) There is this difference between the theory which we have now before us and the other two, that whereas they take our present Gospels as they are, and in the case of the dependence-theory account for the form which they have assumed by direct modifications of the earlier Gospels in the later, and in the case of the oral theory, make them grow immediately and without intervening breaks out of the common ground-stock of tradition, the theory with which we are now dealing confessedly goes behind our present Gospels and accounts for the phenomena which they present by means of certain hypothetical documents which are supposed to have existed antecedently to them.*

(ii.) The mere fact that the documents are hypothetical—that they are found in no extant MS., and that their text cannot be

* It should be observed that though the common names "St. Matthew" and "St. Mark" are used, it is not intended to prejudge the question whether *the whole* of our first and second Gospels is the work respectively of St. Matthew and St. Mark. In any case it is the opinion of the present writer that the third Gospel came as we have it from the pen of St. Luke; and in regard to the other two Gospels he has tried to state the probabilities

appealed to—will be a strong presumption against them to many minds. Those who have had much to do with the criticism of ancient writings will estimate that presumption differently. Only the other day we had a brilliant instance in which a purely hypothetical and imaginary document had its existence verified. It is well known that the “Didaché” or “Doctrine of the Apostles” had been substantially reconstructed from the “Apostolic Constitutions” and other later writings by the Roman Catholic scholar Krawutzcky before there was even a rumour of its actual discovery by Bryennios. The attempted reconstruction of the documents which underlie our Gospels is precisely of the same kind, though it wants the all-important verification!

(iii.) It must not, however, be supposed that these underlying documents are altogether imaginary. The preface to St. Luke’s Gospel expressly tells us that many other biographies were in existence when he undertook to write his. And the great majority of those who hold the documentary theory believe that they have a description of their two principal documents in two often-quoted fragments of the sub-apostolic writer Papias preserved by Eusebius.

(iv.) For all this, which may be true but in any case holds out matter for much discussion, we must not seem to suggest that the documentary hypothesis is easy of proof or one about which scholars are by any means agreed. Once more we have the difference between a statement in general terms and proof in detail. General statements may sound very plausible and attractive, but it is another matter when they come to be confronted with the texts and applied verse by verse. Many who are agreed in contending that some form of the documentary hypothesis is a necessity are by no means agreed as to the particular form which they would adopt.

We cannot here pretend to enumerate all these forms. Suffice it to say that the great majority of the current theories proceed upon the assumption of an original Matthew older than our present St. Matthew, and (under different names and differing in its extent) an original Mark older than our present St. Mark. Papias, as we have just seen, speaks of the work of the first two Evangelists in terms which are thought to apply better to documents which may be believed to be incorporated in our present Gospels than to the actual Gospels as we have them. We reserve the fuller discussion of this point for the individual chapters on St. Matthew and St. Mark.

as they appear to him as candidly as he can, but he has not made up, and does not wish to make up, his own mind, until he has studied the question for himself in systematic order and in close detail.

The true ground, however, for the assumption of these older Gospels is not the evidence of Papias, or at least not that taken alone but in connection with the results of an analysis of the texts of the first three Gospels. It does not need a very profound study of these Gospels to see that their contents fall under three heads. (1) From the ministry of the Baptist onwards the main outlines of the history are substantially the same in all three. (2) Interspersed, however, with this, there are a number of scattered coincidences, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, between St. Matthew and St. Luke, which relate for the most part to sayings or discourses. (3) Besides this matter which is common either to all three Gospels or to two out of the three, St. Mark to a very slight extent, and St. Matthew and St. Luke to a much larger extent, have sections peculiar to themselves and standing apart from the main body of the evangelical tradition. Conspicuous examples of this would be the first two chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke.

(v.) As regards that broad substratum of narrative which underlies the greater part of all three Gospels we have already seen that the order of the successive sections is substantially that of St. Mark. The statistics as to diction will also prepare us for the conclusion that here, too, St. Mark contains the largest proportion of the common language. Short as the second Gospel is, this shortness is obtained by the absence of whole sections, and not—except in very rare cases—by the abridgment of what remains. Augustine called St. Mark an “epitomator,” but his Gospel is no epitome. When the three narratives are placed side by side his is almost invariably the fullest of the three. It may be well to give an example of this in order that the relations of the three Gospels to each other in this respect may be understood. The resemblances which are indicated by the use of different type are those in the Greek original and not in the English version.

Words printed in **thick type** are common to all three Gospels.

Words printed in **SMALL CAPITALS** are common to St. Matthew and St. Luke.

Words printed in **ROMAN CAPITALS** are common to St. Matthew and St. Mark.

Words printed in *ITALIC CAPITALS* are common to St. Mark and St. Luke.

Words printed in *italics* are peculiar to the Gospel in which they occur.

CALL OF LEVI. FEAST IN LEVI'S HOUSE.

MATTHEW IX. 9—13.

And AS *Jesus* PASSED BY from thence, HE SAW a man, called *Matthew*, sitting at the place of toll: and HE SAITH unto him Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

And IT CAME TO PASS, as HE SAT AT MEAT in the house, behold many publicans and SINNERS came and sat DOWN WITH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES. And WHEN the Pharisees SAW IT, THEY said UNTO his disciples, WHY eateth your Master with the publicans and sinners? But when he HEARD IT, he SAID, They that are WHOLE have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

MARK II. 13—17.

AND HE WENT FORTH again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. And AS HE PASSED BY, HE SAW *LEVI* the son of *Alphaeus* sitting at the place of toll, and HE SAITH unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. And IT CAME TO PASS that HE was SITTING AT MEAT in HIS house, and many publicans and SINNERS sat DOWN WITH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES: for there were many and they followed him. And the SCRIBES of the Pharisees, WHEN THEY SAW that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said UNTO his disciples, He eateth AND DRINKETH with publicans and sinners. AND when JESUS HEARD IT, he saith unto THEM, They that are WHOLE have no need of a physician but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

LUKE v. 27—32.

AND after these things HE WENT FORTH, and beheld a publican, named *LEVI*, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me. And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him. And *Levi* made him a great feast in HIS house: and there was a great multitude of publicans and of others that were sitting at meat with them. And the Pharisees and their SCRIBES murmured against his disciples, saying, WHY do ye eat AND DRINK with the publicans and sinners? AND JESUS answering SAID unto THEM, They that are whole have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

(vi.) This may be taken as a fair average sample of the three-fold narrative. It presents in a sufficiently distinct form the kind of phenomena that are usually found elsewhere. For our purpose the most important feature is that which is expressed by the two kinds of larger capitals. These show how the language of St. Mark appears alternately in the other two Gospels. It will be seen that the instances in which this is the case very greatly preponderate over those (expressed by small capitals) in which the two other Gospels, St. Matthew and St. Luke, combine against St. Mark.

(vii.) Thus both the order of the narratives and the language in which they are couched converge upon the same conclusion. They seem to prove that St. Mark has preserved more nearly than either of his fellow Evangelists the original form of that common authority (whatever it was) which lies at the base of the whole evangelical tradition. If we assume that this common authority was something nearly resembling our present St. Mark we can then explain both the parallel columns from St. Matthew and St. Luke. Two writers, both copying independently, and both copying freely from the same source, would naturally reproduce different features characteristic of that source: one set of expressions would appear in the one, another set of expressions would appear in the other.

The alternative hypothesis, that the text of St. Mark was made up by taking here a word from St. Matthew and there a word from St. Luke, implies a process that really is not credible. And what applies to the diction of the parallel sections applies quite as clearly to their order. The inference has been contested, but it is one that every day is receiving a greater amount of recognition, that the common foundation of the Synoptic Gospels must be sought in close connection with St. Mark. Whether that foundation was an oral tradition, or whether it was a written document, in either case St. Mark has reproduced it most exactly.

(viii.) It would greatly simplify matters if we could go a step farther and say not only that this foundation was to be sought in connection with St. Mark, but that it was St. Mark as we have it: in other words, if this relation which we have seen to be so preponderant was not merely preponderant, but an absolutely constant relation. Unfortunately it is not this. In the passage which we have just analysed, and more or less throughout the Gospel, there are words, phrases, clauses, sentences which would have on our plan to be printed in small capitals, as representing an agreement between St. Matthew and St. Luke against St. Mark.

(ix.) Here is one of the great perplexities of Synoptic criticism. If the proposed solutions of this part of the problem seem difficult and far-fetched, these phenomena are mainly the cause. We will mention a few such solutions without discussing them, which would take up much space and lead to no assured and final result.

(a) The original document which all three Evangelists are following was somewhat fuller than our present St. Mark, and contained those expressions which have dropped out of our St. Mark, though they are retained by St. Matthew and St. Luke.

(b) Our St. Mark is a composite work, and embodies to a subordinate extent another document, which is reproduced more exactly in St. Matthew and St. Luke.

(c) St. Luke, though following in the main a document like our St. Mark, had also had sight of our St. Matthew, and introduced some expressions from it.

This is the position in which the question stands at the present moment, and the ultimate answer to it cannot yet be foreseen; it will need very close and careful examination.

Under the second head (b) we placed those passages which were found in St. Matthew and St. Luke, but which were absent from St. Mark. It is not absolutely necessary that all these passages should have the same origin. By far the majority of them, however, are similar in kind, consisting of discourse rather than of narrative. Now a possible interpretation of the language of Papias was that St. Matthew wrote a "collection of discourses." If this were granted, then the hypothesis lay near at hand that the discourses found alike in St. Matthew and St. Luke were taken from this primitive collection, the true work of the publican-Apostle. And it would also be an easy step to explain the attribution of the first Gospel to St. Matthew as due to the fact that it embodied so much of that work, on the principle *nominetur a potiori*.

Here again was a solution in which there was much that was attractive. But again it is necessary to suspend judgment. Once more the statement in general terms is a different thing from the detailed testing. The task has been attempted with commendable zeal, diligence, and courage, but it is by no means easy to reconstruct this original "collection of discourses," and to give an intelligible account of the manner in which it came to assume the form it does in the first and third Gospels. This is another question which must be regarded as still *sub judice*.

(x.) The portions of each Gospel which are peculiar to that Gospel are less difficult to deal with. In any case they would owe their present shape to the final editor. Within limits, we can form a probable conjecture as to whether they were originally oral tradition or written. The strongly Hebraistic bias of the first two chapters of St. Luke make us suspect that the writer had a Palestinian document before him. At the same time the presence of so many touches of style which are characteristic of the author of the third Gospel and the Acts induces us to believe that he worked up the contents of this document in language that was largely his own. On the other hand, the allusions (which all hang together) to facts connected with the court of

the Herods clearly rest on information the source of which would be oral.

The theory as a whole no doubt leaves unsolved problems. It is only thought that these are on the whole fewer and less formidable than those which attach to other theories. Time alone and critical investigation can dispose of them.

§ 4. *Date and Historical Character of the Gospels.*—The main cause of the obscurity which hangs over the origin of the Gospels is the multiform and apparently conflicting character of the data. Even where the evidence distinctly preponderates in one direction, there will still be some residuary phenomena which point in another. If a number of arguments tell in favour of written documents as the base of the common tradition, others still remain which seem to raise a presumption that the original tradition was oral; if five out of six of the data point to the priority of St. Mark, the sixth will seem to give precedence to St. Matthew or St. Luke; if it is difficult to think that our first Gospel as a whole lay before the author of the third, there are yet some places which hardly seem as if they could be independent of each other.

(i.) In regard to the date of the Gospels something of the same state of things obtains, though in a modified degree. We can assert with great confidence that the mass of our Synoptic Gospels, even if not actually committed to writing, had at least assumed its present form before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. That event was a dividing line in the history of the Church such as it has perhaps never seen since. The year 70 saw a fugitive little community at Pella, which was nearly all that remained of the Hebrew-born and Hebrew- or Aramaic-speaking Christians. Meantime in Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, in Rome itself, and if not already, yet within a very short time, in Egypt, Gentile Christianity was advancing "by leaps and bounds."

The Church had no longer a fixed centre and metropolis; its leaders were scattered to the four winds, and the daughter churches vied with each other in the vigour and elasticity of their growth. Where there had once been a single centre, now there were a number of centres, and it seemed quite an open question which would command the rest. Christianity at this moment was a *diaspora* without Jerusalem, even without Palestine. If ever any one thing could be pronounced impossible, it is that our Gospels should have arisen under such conditions. They are Jewish to the core, not in the sense that they do not transcend Judaism, but that their *root* is firmly planted in Judaism, however much they may pass out beyond it.

We need not perhaps deny that some forlorn seeker among the ruins might have hit upon the rather recondite details of topography that are found in the Synoptic Gospels, on Chorazin and Bethsaida, Bethany and Bethphage, Nain and Emmaus. He might have caught and reproduced those treating of Syrian peasant life, which were not peculiar to a single generation. The fishermen on the Sea of Galilee (though sad havoc must have been made among them by the war), with their casting-nets and drag-nets; the toll-office; the labourers waiting to be hired, and then working through the hot wind in the vineyard; the ceremony of a Jewish funeral, the bier and the paid mourners; the lepers and possessed who were so common an object of pity or repulsion; the different grades of officials of various kinds—not only the ordinary toll-collectors but their chiefs (Luke xix. 2), not only the members of the committee of the synagogue, but the one in particular who regulated its services (Matt. ix. 18; Mark v. 22), the verger or attendant who brought out the sacred roll and gave it to or received it from the reader (Luke iv. 20), the local courts, the high court (Matt. v. 22), the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. Many even of these details would hardly have come naturally to a Christian of the generation which followed the extinction of Jewish independence. Nor should we expect such a one to draw those graphic pictures of the Pharisees in the height of their power and glory, “making broad their phylacteries,” praying ostentatiously at the corners of the streets, going up with parade to the Temple, pronouncing some meats clean and others unclean, prescribing ablutions, evading the law on which they laid such stress by their casuistical distinctions.

All these things we cannot but feel are drawn from the life; and still more from the life, and only from the life, could a Christian writer depict the Master whose name he bore, in conflict with these men, called like them “Rabbi,” but arraigning their dearest principles; exposing their hollowness and formalism; propounding larger and higher views of the Sabbath, of marriage and divorce, of the resurrection, yet pursued by them with the same casuistry which they practised among themselves, in the hope that He might be caught tripping; asked his opinion about “bills of divorcement,” about Satanic agency in the casting out of devils, about the position of the woman in a case of Levirate marriage, and about the reconciling of a passage in the Old Testament which spoke of the Messiah at once as “Lord” and “Son.”

Least of all would any Christian of this later date have reproduced as our Evangelists have done so many phases in the history of the Messianic expectation and its gradually revealed fulfil-

ment; now writing entirely from the point of view of a Jew with his particularist notions about the "consolation of Israel," the "redemption of Jerusalem," the "kingdom" promised to the chosen people; now presenting the idea as a subject of debate and question—Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah, or was He the prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy; or was He Elijah who was to precede and prepare the way for the Messiah? Did not the Baptist himself express a doubt as to whether He was the Expected One or no?—And even when he is asserting the claim which Christ really made, letting it be seen how widely the idea as represented by Him differed from the ordinary conception—a Messiah who did not "strive or cry or lift up his voice in the streets"; a Messiah whom no one had constituted "a judge or a divider" (Luke xii. 14); a Messiah who rode in triumph into Jerusalem upon an ass, and there suffered the enthusiasm of His followers to melt away; who bade the loyal adherent who would have fought for Him sheathe his sword, and who put the climax to His own life by dying like any other victim of Roman oppression upon the cross.

(ii.) The great bulk of the Gospel narrative thus bears its date upon its face as distinctly as if the writers had signed their names at the foot of it. Theories which would throw the composition of the Gospels into the second century are simply wide of the mark. At that interval of time and at that stage of the Church's history the conditions which our Gospels presuppose no longer existed. And yet, although this is the case, there are touches in them here and there which appear to date not before but after the taking of Jerusalem.

In reproducing the language of prophecy it is natural that a writer should allow his reproduction to be coloured by his own relation to the fulfilment of that prophecy. From this point of view it has been often remarked that the three Gospels practically date themselves. When St. Matthew records the events which were to attend the taking of Jerusalem he does so evidently with an eye to his own readers. When the abominable thing—the unclean Roman standards—invades the sanctity of the Temple, that is to be a signal for Christians to fly with all speed, and they will pray that their flight may not be in the winter or on the Sabbath, for an impeded or shortened journey will not carry them quickly enough beyond the reach of danger. It is clear from this that when it was written the catastrophe was near at hand. But it had not yet actually come; because St. Matthew, as he goes on, puts no interval between that catastrophe and the end of the world: "*Immediately* after the tribulation of these days the sun shall be darkened," &c. (Matt. xxiv. 29).

St. Mark apparently wrote a little later: he still expects the end of the world to follow quickly, but he does not regard it as simultaneous with the fall of Jerusalem: "*In those days*, after that tribulation," &c. (Mark xiii. 24). By the time that St. Luke is writing the taking of Jerusalem is an event in the past: his description is no longer couched in general terms but is full of precise detail suggested by the facts as they actually happened—the compassing with armies, the vallum thrown up to complete the investment, the utter destruction, the massacre, dispersion, and enslavement which follow, while Jerusalem is trodden underfoot of the Gentiles "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xix. 42—44, compared with xxi. 20—24). In those very "times of the Gentiles" St. Luke was writing, expecting (but in vain) that they would pass away.

It has been often supposed, especially by English writers, that the Acts of the Apostles was composed at the point of time with which it ends: if so, it was natural to infer that the Gospel was written somewhat earlier, which would bring it about to the years 60 or 61. But apart from the argument of which we have just been speaking, the preface to the Gospel demolishes every such supposition. It implies a far more advanced stage of Gospel-writing than can have been possible at such a date. It would make St. Luke an older Gospel not only than St. Matthew and St. Mark but even (if those Gospels are based upon antecedent documents) older than the documents out of which they were composed—a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole theory. The true date of St. Luke must be placed at a substantial interval after the taking of Jerusalem—say, about the year 80. There is nothing in the data which conflicts with this.

In regard to St. Matthew and St. Mark the case is not quite so clear. The phenomena are not all strictly of a piece. The considerations just urged seem fairly decisive in placing the main body of the first Gospel at a measurable distance before the event of A.D. 70; and the main body of the second Gospel within nearer sight of that event. At the same time we have seen that viewed on the side of their literary relations to each other the second Gospel may claim a certain priority. There are, too, single expressions (like "the king was wroth and sent his armies and slew those murderers, and burnt up their city," in Matt. xxii. 7), which seem to look back upon the destruction of Jerusalem. How these apparent contradictions are to be reconciled is a part of the problem which still seeks solution.

5. *History of the Use and Canonical Reception of the Gospels.*—The desired solution may perhaps be found when we come to consider the circumstances under which the Gospels were first put into cir-

ulation. We cannot suppose that there was any formal publication such as took place in the case of Greek or Roman classics at this date, when the author publicly recited his new piece in a lecture-hall filled with his friends and admirers, and when some famous publisher like Atticus undertook to have it copied in wholesale quantities and launched upon the market. The early Christians had command of no such machinery. They were as a rule drawn from the poorer classes. Many of them must have been illiterate. The few who distinguished themselves by composition had picked up the art as it were by the wayside—in some public office like the collecting of market dues and tolls, or in the ranks of a provincial profession. We are not to think of authors like these as surrounded by the shorthand writers and caligraphers who attended upon the literary men of Rome or Alexandria, who took down and transcribed their productions in clear and beautiful characters like those of the Bankesian Iliad or of the famous "Codex Vaticanus."

Many signs point to the conclusion that the period of greatest activity in the composition of Gospels included the years just before and just after the fall of Jerusalem—an anxious and troubled period, when the wisest course for Christians was to avoid public notice as much as possible. Under these circumstances of constraint and secrecy the Gospels were written, very probably on rough material, with linked letters, not exactly in the later cursive hand, but in the hand used for everyday business transactions, which fell some way short of the purity and clearness of the book-hand. So written, the first copies would be passed about privately from hand to hand, often suffering in the process, and becoming more degenerate as bad copies were propagated. This would account for the many variants that are found in the early texts.

But there is one particular feature which we must keep specially in view. The private persons who possessed and circulated these copies, and even the church officers who from time to time had charge of them, would not feel exactly bound by the obligations of professional copyists. They would not reject an opportunity of enriching their MS. with additions from the oral tradition, which, if they were not part of the original Gospel, might have been, so far as their contents were concerned, and were very possibly quite as authentic. In this way not a few slight but deeply interesting and important additions have come down to us which are wanting in what we call "the best MSS.," and upon the purest line of transmission, but which for all that we may be very glad to have preserved.

Nor can we suppose that the same persons who accepted these

additions would feel themselves debarred from making other seemingly trivial alterations so as to give greater point to an expression or to clear up an obscurity. Some such small changes may have been made in copies so early that all trace of their origin had been lost. The autographs of the Gospels, written on fragile papyrus and much used, soon perished, and these interpolated copies alone became the parents of that long succession which has come down to us.

Started thus upon their career, the Gospels were yet not at first the same exclusive authority which they soon became. They were read in the churches; they were doubtless used in catechetical instruction; and they must have been often eagerly studied by private individuals. But the written Gospel had to compete with another source of information which had not yet run dry. The same Papias above mentioned, who gives such interesting if tantalising details about the first two Gospels, records also (but not necessarily in direct antithesis to them) his own preference for what he calls "the living and abiding voice" of oral tradition.

There is no reason to think that he would have valued more highly words which he was assured had been spoken by St. Matthew than words which he knew to have been written by St. Matthew's own hand. He probably had in mind more pretentious and less authentic Gospels, like those used by Basilides and his followers, which had already begun to be current in his day. Even side by side with our present Gospels, there sprang into existence other embellished and apocryphal histories, a growth of tares which in ancient times seldom failed to shoot up round the memory of illustrious lives. But these apocryphal Gospels, connected as they were by many links of genuine tradition with the true Gospels, and some of them even based upon those Gospels, as the Gospel according to the Hebrews on that of St. Matthew, naturally awoke a certain suspicion among the leaders of the Church; and we can understand how a man like Papias would receive with more satisfaction the stories that were told him by venerable persons who had been themselves the contemporaries of Apostles, and whom he could cross-question as to the source from which their narratives were derived.

In any case, for some fifty years after the fall of Jerusalem, there was a concurrent stream of oral tradition side by side with the written Gospels. The Church writers (such as there were, for but few of their remains have come down to us) drew from this stream as well as from the Gospels. And even when they used the Gospels, their use of them seems to have been affected by the fact that they were still in what we may call an oral

period, a period of speech and action rather than of writing. They are apt to trust to memory, and to reproduce freely, as persons quoting from memory will do, giving the sense correctly, but often combining what was found in one Gospel with what was found in another, and, like the New Testament writers themselves, not seldom mixing together passages more or less widely separated in the original.

To the period of which we are speaking belong the Apostolic Fathers, as they are called, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas, Hermas, and the newly recovered "Doctrine of the Apostles." The chief writer of the next period is Justin Martyr, whose "Apology" falls about 150 A.D. Nearly of the same date is the so-called Second Epistle of Clement, which, since the missing portion has been added to it, is seen to be really the earliest existing specimen of a Christian homily. With Justin may be also bracketed his disciple Tatian.

There can be no doubt that Justin quotes, and quotes largely, from our present Gospels, as a number of the distinctive expressions and details of each reappear in his pages. He is fond of the title "Memoirs of the Apostles," by which he usually refers to our Gospels; and he appears to be acquainted with the tradition which connects the Gospel of St. Mark specially with St. Peter. A large part of the Synoptic narrative might be reproduced, in outline at least, from Justin. Justin, however, still makes a subordinate use either of oral tradition or of an Apocryphal Gospel, perhaps of both. His contemporary, the author of the Second Epistle of Clement, along with a number of unmistakable quotations from St. Matthew and St. Luke, also openly quotes apocryphal authorities, of which the Gospel according to the Egyptians is one. We are still, it will be seen, in a period of transition. Though the authority of our Gospels is firmly rooted, it is still shared by others.

They are, however, gradually becoming separated from the rest, and acquiring a character of exceptional sacredness. A writer like Papias is careful to vindicate the historical accuracy of St. Mark, but he does so in a way which might apply to any other historian. The exceptional and sacred character attached at first, not to any particular record, but to the "sayings of the Lord" in themselves. To these sayings the writers of the first generation after the Apostles were wont to give a name which well expressed their conception of them. They called them "Oracles." Like the utterances of the Pythoness at Delphi, they were brief in form, but charged with concentrated meaning, and they carried a more than human authority.

There is, indeed, some difference of opinion as to the extent of

the application of this name "Oracles." Many would apply it to the complete Gospels as we have them; but it seems better, at least in the majority of the places where it is used, to understand by it rather the "Gospel within the Gospel," the actual sayings and discourses of the Lord. "His words are short and concise," says Justin, "for He was no sophist, but His speech was the power of God."*

It was in the struggle with heresy that the position of the Canonical Gospels came to be gradually defined. The Gnostics, whose greatest activity falls in the first half of the second century, made especial use of Gospels which they either composed or interpolated and otherwise tampered with, so as to make them convey their doctrines. It was a work of this kind which was used in the Homily ascribed to Clement. But the leaders of the Church entered upon a struggle with Gnosticism, and they took steps to guard against its insinuating itself in this way. They adopted in spirit the Talmudical motto, "to make a fence round the law." They drew the cordon more and more closely round those Gospels which seemed to them free from heretical taint, and which they conceived to rest upon the best authority.

It was in the age of Justin that this process was going on. It must have proceeded with great rapidity, for by the time of Irenæus it was not only complete, but it was treated as if it had been some time complete, the established law of the Church. There is a famous passage in the third book of Irenæus "Against Heresies" which was written about the year 185. It is worth while to quote this passage, as it shows what was the tone of thought at this date in the Church on the subject of the Gospels. The "fourfold Gospel" is no novelty, but has its settled place in the mystical order and constitution of things.

"Forasmuch as there are four quarters of the world in which we live, as there are also four universal winds, and as the Church is scattered over all the earth, and the Gospel is the pillar and base of the Church and the breath (or spirit) of life, it is likely that it should have four pillars breathing immortality on every side, and kindling afresh the life of men. Whence it is evident that the Word, the architect of all things, who sitteth upon the cherubim and holdeth all things together, having been made manifest unto men, gave us the Gospel in a fourfold shape, but held together by one Spirit. As David, entreating for His presence, saith, 'Thou that sitteth upon the cherubim show Thyself.' For the cherubim are of fourfold visage, and their visages are symbols of the economy of the Son of Man. . . . And the Gospels therefore agree with them, over which presideth Jesus Christ."

The writer then goes on to apply in detail the symbolism of the cherubim to each in turn of the four Gospels, following an

* "Apol." i 14: comp. Rom. i. 16.

order different from that with which we are now most familiar. St. John he compares to the Lion, St. Luke to the Calf, St. Matthew to the Man, St. Mark to the Eagle. A usage which has reached this reflective and speculative stage is clearly one of long standing.

From the time of Irenæus onwards all obscurity has vanished. Up to Irenæus, or we may say up to the year 185, we are obliged to piece together one item of evidence with another from the scanty literature which has come down to us, and to reconstruct a hypothetical view from imperfect materials. But from the date we have mentioned all becomes clear: evidence pours in on every side. Irenæus, as we have seen, is quite unequivocal. Perhaps a year or two before Irenæus, or just upon the threshold of his great work, comes a remarkable document called from its discoverer the Muratorian Fragment. This fragment is the first canonical list of the Books of the New Testament. It is mutilated at the beginning, but there can be no doubt that it originally contained an enumeration of our four Gospels. Not long after Irenæus is Clement of Alexandria (flourished 193 A.D.); soon after Clement Tertullian (writing 194—221 A.D.); contemporary with Tertullian Hippolytus (died 236 A.D.); and but a little younger than Hippolytus Origen (died 253 A.D.), who again overlaps the Latin writers Novatian and Cyprian (martyred 258 A.D.)

These names stand at the head of a voluminous literature, and their testimony is practically unanimous. The Alexandrian writers are somewhat freer than the rest in their use of extra-canonical books, but their deliberate language is essentially the same. The only Gospels "received without dispute in the Church under heaven"* are our present four.

We need not pursue the history of the reception of the Gospels farther. Its pages are really closed. There has been no appreciable difference in the attitude of the Church towards the Gospels from the Muratorian Fragment to our own day. It is true that in recent years a sharper controversy has gathered round them: their dates, their authorship, their historical character has been questioned. In these questionings criticism and hyper-criticism have been largely mingled, and the end of the process has not yet been reached. Only perhaps we can trace, not expressed in any formula, and often not consciously realised, a sort of silent gravitating towards a view more nearly akin to that of the first age than of subsequent ages; a tendency to treat the Gospels as in the first instance historical authorities for the acts

* Origen, ap. Eus. *H.E.*, vi. 25.

and words of Christ, not altogether perfect or infallible authorities, fragmentary, incomplete, varying from time to time in the nature of their authentication, and embodying along with the facts something also of the conceptions of simple and unscientific minds; and yet guarded against any wide possibilities of error by the assured primitiveness of their date, bearing on their face a thousand marks which stamp them as the product of a still living and faithful tradition, and guaranteed above all by their consistent presentation of a single unique and commanding figure, which neither their authors nor any other hand of man could have invented. There is a tendency to detach this portrait from its framework, and to see in the Gospels primarily, what Papias and his contemporaries saw in them, the record of "Oracles of the Lord."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

1. *Early Statements respecting the Gospel.*—In the preceding chapter mention has several times been made of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, a city not far from Colossæ, in the most flourishing and active part of Phrygia. Two brief statements by Papias exceed in importance all the other early references to our Gospel, partly from their early date and partly from their express character. A slight addition which has been recently made to the extant fragments of Papias would tend to show that he was writing as late as the reign of Antoninus Pius (138—161), or, at least, of Hadrian (117—138). But the passages of which we are speaking cannot well be later than the beginning of Hadrian's reign, as the context implies that Papias himself was not separated by more than a generation from the Apostles, and that some who could speak with an authority almost equal to that of the Apostles still survived. We are thus carried back to the time when so many critical changes were taking place, and when the literature which should have recorded them was so scanty. The statements of Papias have the further advantage of being, not like the references in the few tracts or letters that have come down to us, mere quotations from or side-allusions to the text of unnamed Gospels, but definite affirmations bearing the names which still appear in the titles of our Bibles.

The words of Papias respecting St. Matthew, literally rendered, are as follows :

“Matthew then composed the Oracles of the Lord in the Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as he was able.”

Hebrew means here, not, of course, the Hebrew of the Old Testament, which was by this time a dead language, nor yet the Hebrew of the Talmud, which was the property of a few Rabbis, but the Aramaic vernacular commonly spoken in Palestine.

Papias does not stand alone in asserting that St. Matthew wrote in this dialect: he is only the first of a chain of writers who say the same thing. Origen says it several times: twice in the Commentary on St. John written in 228—231, and once in the Commentary on St. Matthew written in 245—6. This latter passage affirms expressly that St. Matthew wrote “in Hebrew [Aramaic] characters.” Older still than Origen, the first great name in the Alexandrian Church, Pantænus, teacher of Clement, and a contemporary of Irenæus, was reported to have gone as a missionary to “the Indians” (meaning probably the Homeritæ in Arabia Felix), and to have found there a copy of St. Matthew’s Gospel “in Hebrew characters” left by St. Bartholomew.

These early authorities are quoted and endorsed by Eusebius (*circa* 324) and Eusebius again by Jerome (392), who claims also to have seen a copy at Beroëa, in Syria, though there is much reason to think that in this he is confusing the work of St. Matthew with the apocryphal “Gospel according to the Hebrews.” There is no counter-tradition which at all conflicts with these statements, so that it would not be wrong to say that the universal opinion of antiquity, so far as we have the means of ascertaining that opinion, is that St. Matthew wrote “in Hebrew, for Hebrews,” *i.e.* in Aramaic, for Aramaic-speaking Christians.

2. *Comparison of these Statements with our present Gospel.*—Our next question then is to ask, Does the description thus given fit our present Gospel? Was our Gospel one of the many translations of the Aramaic original into Greek? Such a translation might conceivably have been made by St. Matthew himself, and there are some who believe that it was so made. There is no doubt that Irenæus and Origen had in their minds our present Gospel. There is no doubt that Pantænus also was in the habit of using that Gospel, though what precisely was the document which he found among the Arabians (if he did find it), we have no means of testing. That Papias, too, used our present Gospel is extremely probable. But it should be remembered that he is not sitting down to criticise the text of the Gospel or even to trace its history: he is merely stating an historical fact, traditionally handed down, and referring to times considerably anterior to his own.

Are there valid reasons for supposing that this tradition relates to our Gospel? (i.) Scholars who have examined the subject have not been able to discover in the diction or style of the Gospel any clear proof that it is a translation. There are certain cases of play upon words which rather seem to point to a Greek original. Besides, when the Gospel is compared with the still

extant fragments of an undoubtedly Hebrew or Aramaic work like the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the idioms of the latter are seen to be Hebrew where those of the former are not. (ii.) So far the line of argument is somewhat precarious. There are translations and translations. In some the transfusion of thought and language is much more thorough than in others. But a further examination of our Gospel reveals phenomena which it is more difficult to reconcile with the theory of an Aramaic original. The treatment of Old Testament quotations in the Gospel is peculiar; and a kind of law seems to run through them. Those which occur in the parts of the Gospel which have no parallel, frequently show the influence of the Hebrew, and present many points of contact with the Targums, or Aramaic paraphrases which have preserved for us the traditional interpretations used in our Lord's time in the synagogues.

On the other hand the quotations in those parts of the Gospel which have direct parallels in the other synoptics are taken from the Septuagint. Good examples of the first class would be Matt. ii. 6 (= Micah v. 2), a passage expressly applied to the Messiah in the Targums, and one the form of which bears every appearance of having been influenced by oral paraphrase; and Matt. ii. 23, where "He shall be called a Nazarene" is best explained by a play upon the Hebrew *netzer*, "a Branch" (*vide* Isa. xi. 1); Matt. xii. 18-21 = Isa. xlii. 1-4, which diverges widely from the Greek, is an example of a comment inserted into the body of the Evangelical narrative. Quotations like Matt. xiii. 14, 15, or xv. 4, 8, 9, which belong to the common synoptic matter agree with the Greek. There are some seventeen quotations which are thus common to all three synoptics, besides a number more which are common to St. Matthew and St. Mark, or St. Matthew and St. Luke.

3. *Our present St. Matthew a Composite Work.*—These phenomena, which are clearly marked, strongly suggest the conclusion that our present Gospel is a composite work. We have already seen that this was probably the case from a comparison of the three Gospels with each other, and now our previous argument is confirmed from another side. An analysis of the first Gospel resolves it into three main parts. One of these is the matter peculiar to the Evangelist, a characteristic feature of which we have just been considering. A second comprises the whole framework of narrative from the Baptism of John to the Resurrection. The third consists of certain great blocks of discourse, inserted at intervals in the midst of the narrative. It is hard to believe that the first and second of these parts came originally from the same hand. Some common welding together they have

of course undergone, due to the hand which gave to our Gospel its present shape; but this superficial adjustment and actual first composition are quite different things.

When the narrative of St. Matthew is closely examined by the side of that of St. Mark, the greater originality of the latter is almost everywhere visible. If not our St. Mark itself, a document very like our St. Mark supplied the base for both the other Gospels. Now, though it is quite within the bounds of possibility that the Apostle Matthew thus reproduced another man's work at second-hand instead of having recourse to his own recollections, it cannot be said that such a hypothesis is probable. Much more probable is it that a later—though not late—writer combined these three disparate elements into one, himself being responsible for the first, and drawing upon other sources for the remaining two. More probable, on one condition, viz., that some good reason can be given for the tradition which connects the name of St. Matthew with the Gospel.

4. *The Collection of Discourses in the Gospel.*—So far we have spoken of two out of the three elements in the Gospel, but we have as yet said very little about the third. When we put aside the preliminary narratives, the most distinctive feature in the first and third Gospels as compared with the second is the much greater amplitude of the discourses contained in them. In the first Gospel these discourses show an even greater art of composition. It is not probable that they were all entirely spoken on the occasions with which they are connected. Some of them could not have been spoken at once at the times to which they are assigned by St. Matthew, and also at those at which they appear in St. Luke. It is clear that in St. Matthew there is a certain amount of grouping; sayings of similar character are brought into juxtaposition.

With this characteristic of St. Matthew's Gospel in our mind let us look back once more at the testimony of Papias. He says, "Matthew composed the Oracles of the Lord in Hebrew." We have already admitted that this term "Oracles of the Lord" might mean a complete Gospel, such as we now have. But then we have also seen that it is very doubtful that St. Matthew ever composed such a Gospel in Hebrew. It is therefore natural to fall back on the narrower and stricter sense of the word translated "Oracles," and to identify them with these discourses for which "Oracles," the word used specially of the utterances of the prophets, is the most appropriate that could be chosen.

Then at once daylight seems to dawn upon our inquiry. The condition for which we had stipulated is satisfactorily fulfilled. The Gospel, as we have it, was not composed by St. Matthew;

but St. Matthew did compose the collection of "Oracles" embodied in our Gospel, and that most distinctive part gave the Gospel its name. The original collection, as an independent work, written on frail papyrus, and exposed as we may well believe to perils both by land and by sea, perished. In that time of harassed movement and distress which environed the destruction of Jerusalem, there is nothing in this to surprise us, even though the scanty Christian chronicles (which owe nearly all they have to tell us to the Jew Josephus) take no notice of the fact. But, before it perished, St. Matthew's little roll had been already copied, and either that copy or another was soon incorporated, with such changes and rearrangement as the transfer necessitated, into our present Gospel.

This is a hypothetical view of the way in which our present Gospel arose. The impression must not be given that it is free from difficulties, or that it has as yet been completely substantiated by proof. It has already been implied that this is not the case, nor would the writer of this venture to claim for it a greater degree of acceptance than it deserves; he only puts it forward as the theory which seems to him most likely, in its main lines, to hold its own.

5. *Doctrinal Character and Purpose of the Gospel.*—The doctrinal character and purpose of the Gospel was very early apprehended, and on this point, too, we have anticipated somewhat in the preceding chapter. If the Gospel was written "for Hebrews, in Hebrew," it naturally followed that it would be written in such a way as would most commend the faith of Christ to the Jews. The great stumbling-block for the unconverted was the claim that the crucified Jesus, from the despised Galilean city Nazareth, was the Messiah; and the great turning-point for those who accepted Christianity was the conviction of His Messiahship. To this then the Evangelist addresses himself, and he seeks to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was really the Messiah of Jewish prophecy, really the legitimate descendant of Abraham and David, heir, in a grander sense than David himself had ever realised, to the Davidic empire. Accordingly he dwells in minute detail not only on the direct fulfilments of prophecy, but also on those many particulars in the Gospel narrative which seemed to reproduce features or incidents connected with the ideal figures of the Old Dispensation.

The wonderful birth and symbolical Name of which Isaiah spoke pre-figured the Birth and Incarnation of the Messiah. He was the Deliverer whom Micah had foretold as to be born in David's city. The wailing which attended the carrying away captive of the "children of Rachel" (*i.e.* inhabitants of Judah

and Bethlehem) by the Chaldeans, typified the wailing which arose upon the massacre which aimed at the life of the infant Messiah. The Chosen People Israel came up out of Egypt, and so must the Messiah—God's Chosen—be brought up out of Egypt. If He took up His abode in the city of Nazareth that, too, had been intimated in one of His symbolical titles. Like the servant of Jehovah His ministry was to be mild and gentle, tender towards the weak and wavering, not loud or demonstrative. Like that servant in another aspect He was to take upon Himself the infirmities and sufferings of humanity. Even the reward paid to the traitor Apostle has its counterpart in that goodly sum, as it is ironically called, which the prophet Zachariah represents the discarded Shepherd of Israel as receiving for his services. None of these are mere chance coincidences. The course of both the Old and New Dispensations is all Divinely ordered. There is a "pre-established harmony" between its parts; the Old points forward to the New, and the New points backward to the Old; nothing happens of itself, but that the word spoken "by the Lord through the prophets" might be fulfilled.

This is the leading idea of St. Matthew's Gospel. It is not merely an apologetic argument addressed to his countrymen: it is rather the fruit of his own devout reflection, and that of others like him, tracing the finger of God in history, and bringing out the deep significance of those events on which the Christian mind delights to dwell. Such an attitude of mind is essentially Jewish. It is true that the Gentile converts adopted the argument from prophecy; but it was not possible that they should have so strong a grasp—like that of the ancient prophets themselves—on the Divine overruling of all events and circumstances in the carrying out of a religious purpose.

There is something equally Jewish in the way in which the Evangelist clings to the old use of terms. Jerusalem is still for him the "Holy City," the Messiah is "King of the Jews," or "Son of David"; the God whom people praise is "Israel's God." It is to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel" that the Apostles are sent. The heathen lie outside the sphere of Christ's mission.* Even "at the regeneration" the "twelve tribes" of Israel are to be judged by the Apostles for the Messiah.

In keeping with this is the stress which is laid upon the fulfilment of the law. St. Paul himself at times put forward this side of the question;† but he is far more often occupied in showing that the law, as a system of precepts, has come to an end. What

* Matthew xv. 23, 26, 27.

† Romans iii. 31; xiii. 9.

with him is the exception, with St. Matthew is the rule, laid down with unequivocal precision.*

And yet the first Evangelist is no narrow-minded or illiberal Christian. He thoroughly accepts the admission of the Gentiles into the Church, and records many sayings which anticipate that admission. He alone describes the visit of the eastern sages; he takes notice of the words of the Baptist demolishing the pretensions of the Jews as the children of Abraham; he mentions the announcement to the faithful centurion that many should come from the east and west and sit down with the patriarchs in the heavenly kingdom; with true historical perspective, as the history advances and the conflict grows deeper, declarations of this kind increase in number,† till the Gospel finally closes with the command to "make disciples of all nations."

The Evangelist—who thus if he is not St. Matthew himself, most probably retains to the full the spirit of St. Matthew—stands midway between two worlds. His roots are struck deep into the past; he is impressed with the strict continuity of the dispensations on the dividing line between which he was living; and yet he also looks forward into the future with no unfriendly or reluctant gaze; as the prophets had foreseen the coming of Christ, so he recognises that Christ had foreseen the throwing wide of the gates to those whom the Old Law had excluded. He has not discarded Judaism, but with him it is a Judaism of the spirit and not of the letter: Judaism enlarged and Christianized. Jew among Jews, as he is, the Evangelist does not look to the high-placed Pharisees and Sadducees as the true representatives of his people. He turns rather with tender sympathy to the poor and suffering, and he sees in them the true "children of the kingdom." The "poor in spirit"; the angels of Christ's little ones who behold the face of His Father; the Gospel hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes; the light yoke and easy burden of Christ, are phrases peculiar to this Gospel. St. John speaks of the "new birth" which the believer must undergo, but St. Matthew has portrayed that new birth with the most delicate and feeling touches. He has caught and saved for us those words of his Master which most truly express the innermost essence of Christianity.

6. *Analysis of the Gospel.*—Bearing in mind the results which have been so far reached, both as to the critical history and doctrinal character and purpose of the Gospel, we are now in a position to attempt an analysis of its contents, such as may at once bring out the leading features of its structure, and also

* Matthew v. 17—19.

† Matthew xxi. 28—32, 42, 43; xxii. 1—10.

help to illustrate the foregoing discussions. We will do this, premising once more that we are not dealing with assured conclusions—no such conclusions as yet exist—but only with such as seem best to commend themselves for provisional acceptance. The three sources of the Gospel appear to be (i.) the *Mark-Gospel* (which we call by this name so as not to prejudge its exact identity with our St. Mark); (ii.) the *Oracles*, originally composed in Hebrew by St. Matthew; (iii.) *Oral Tradition*, specially collected by the Evangelist.

The structure of the Gospel is determined by its leading idea, the presentation of Jesus of Nazareth as the Jewish Messiah. The first two chapters bring together a number of notes in the birth and early life of Jesus, marking Him out as the Messiah of prophecy. In the remainder of the Gospel materials, which the Evangelist found already existing, are worked up in such a way as to throw into relief His Messianic character. From this point of view the climax is reached when the reserve and delicate, indirect self-manifestation of Jesus Himself, with the corresponding prolonged hesitation of His disciples, are at last broken by St. Peter's explicit confession. This height, however, is no sooner reached and the confession confirmed by the glories of the Mount of Transfiguration than the road begins to lead downwards into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Another aspect of the Messianic office is brought out: the Messiah was not only to reign as King over His people, but He was also to suffer for the sins of mankind.*

*The Earthly Career, Character, Mission, and Death of Jesus,
the Messiah.*

I. Preliminary history: Birth and childhood of the Messiah in fulfilment of prophecy (i., ii.).

Abrahamic and Davidic Lineage—Virgin-Birth—Visit of the Magi—Flight into Egypt—Massacre of Bethlehem—Return to Nazareth.

Except the genealogy, which was probably written, *Oral Tradition*, collected by the evangelist.

II. Inauguration to the Messianic office (iii. 1—iv. 11).

Ministry of John—Baptism—Temptation.

Outline from *Mark-Gospel* with additions from *Oracles*.

* In the Greek text published by Drs. Westcott and Hort, attention is called by the mode of printing to the fact that in this Gospel the formula which marks the commencement of our Lord's public ministry (iv. 17) is exactly repeated at the point where He first begins to prophesy His approaching death (xvi. 21). Both are critical moments which correspond to each other.

III. Galilean Ministry of the Messiah, in a series of scenes or pictures, partly narrative and partly descriptive or typical.

1. First scene. Typical examples of His words and works (iv. 12—ix. 34).

i. Historic introduction, dating from the imprisonment of John (iv. 12—v. 2).

Settlement at Capernaum—Call of Apostles—Circuit of Galilee.

From *Mark-Gospel*.

ii. Typical discourse[s] on the Messianic Kingdom (v. 3—vii. 29).

Character approved by the Messiah in the members of His Kingdom—The Messianic Righteousness—Laws of the Kingdom—Devotion—Duties—Rules of Life.

From the *Matthean Oracles*.

iii. Collection of representative works (viii. 1—ix. 34).

The Leper—The Centurion's Servant—Peter's Wife's Mother—Healing—Followers—Storm at Sea—Two Gadarene Demoniacs Paralytic at Capernaum—Connecting Narrative: Call of Matthew, and Discourse at his House—Ruler's Daughter—Issue of Blood—Two blind Men—Deaf and dumb Demoniacs.

Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*; many think that the healing of the centurion's daughter came from the *Oracles*.

2. Second scene. Mission of the Twelve with its sequel (ix. 35—xii.).

i. Circumstances of the Mission (ix. 35—x.).

Description probably from *Oracles*.

ii. Discourse on the Mission (x. 5—42).

Mission for Israel—Charge to the Missionaries—Their Reward.

Mainly from *Oracles*.

iii. Thread of Narrative continued: Rising opposition; the little flock of Believers (xi., xii.).

Question and character of the Baptist—Chorazin and Bethsaida—The Gospel of babes and toilers—Two Sabbath Anecdotes*—Gentleness of the Messiah†—Casting out devils by Beelzebub—The Messiah's fame.*

Mainly from *Oracles*; sections marked * from *Mark-Gospel*; that marked † a comment by the evangelist.

3. Third scene. Parabolic teaching of the Messiah; continuation of narrative (xiii., xiv.).

- i. Seven parables (xiii. 1—52).
The Sower—Wheat and Tares—Mustard-seed—Leaven—
Treasure—Pearl—Drag-net.
Mark-Gospel and Oracles intermixed.
- ii. Thread of narrative continued (xiii. 53—xiv. 36).
Rejection at Nazareth—Death of John—Feeding of five
thousand—Walking on the Water.
From Mark-Gospel.
4. Fourth scene. Culminating point of opposition and confes-
sion (xv. 1—xvi. 20).
 - i. Conflict with the Pharisees on tradition (xv. 1—20).
From Mark-Gospel.
 - ii. Withdrawal to the north—Excursion across the Lake (xv.
21—xvi. 12).
The Canaanite Woman—Feeding of four thousand—Further
Conflict with Pharisees.
Mainly from Mark-Gospel.
 - iii. Second withdrawal (xvi. 13—20).
Peter's Confession ; climax to the recognition of the Messiah
by His disciples.
Mark-Gospel combined with Oracles.
5. Fifth scene. The confession ratified—Forebodings of the
end (xvi. 21—xviii. 35).
 - i. Cæsarea Philippi (xvi. 21—xvii. 20).
First announcement of the Passion—Transfiguration—The
epileptic Boy.
From Mark-Gospel.
 - ii. Return to Capernaum (xvii. 22—27).
Second announcement of Passion—The Temple-tax.
Mark-Gospel and Special Tradition.
 - iii. Discourses at Capernaum (xviii.).
The Child-like Temper—Offences—Straying—Discipline—
The Unmerciful Servant.
Mainly from Oracles ; introduction from Mark-Gospel.
6. Last Journey to Jerusalem (xix., xx.).
Marriage and Divorce—Children Blessed—The Rich Young
Man—Labourers in the Vineyard—Third announcement
of Passion—Sons of Zebedee—Two Blind Beggars at
Jericho.
From Mark-Gospel ; Parable of Labourers from Oracles.
7. The Messiah at Jerusalem ; final acts and discourses (xxi.
—xxv.).

- i. Entrance into Jerusalem (xxi. 1—17).
The triumphal Procession—Cleansing of the Temple—Babes and Sucklings.
From *Mark-Gospel*.
 - ii. Discourses and controversies (xxi. 18—xxii. 45).
The Barren Fig-tree—Authority of Messiah—The two Sons †—Wicked Husbandmen—The Messianic Banquet †—The special Robe †—Plots frustrated.
Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*; sections marked † from *Oracles*.
 - iii. Denunciation of the Pharisees (xxiii.).
Another group of sayings from *Oracles*.
 - iv. Discourses on the last things (xxiv., xxv.).
Apocalyptic Discourse—Watchful Servants—Virgins—Talents—Last Judgment.
The apocalyptic discourse mainly from *Mark-Gospel*, rest from *Oracles*.
- IV. Passion and Resurrection of the Messiah (xxvi.—xxviii.).
1. Two days before the Passover (xxvi. 1—16).
Fourth announcement of Passion—The Rulers' Plot—Anointing for Burial—Treachery of Judas.
Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*.
 2. i. The Last Supper (xxvi. 17—35).
The Paschal Meal—Betrayal foretold—Institution of the Eucharist.
 - ii. On the way to Gethsemane—Dispersion of the Disciples and Peter's denial foretold.
From *Mark-Gospel*.
 3. Arrest, trial, and crucifixion; fulfilment of prophecy noted (xxvi. 36—xxvii. 56).
Gethsemane—Arrest—Trial before Caiaphas—Peter's Fall—§End of Judas—Trial before Pilate—§Pilate's Indecision—The Sentence—Mocking—Simon of Cyrene—Crucifixion—§Attendant Wonders—Witnesses of the Crucifixion.
From *Mark-Gospel*, with traces of special tradition in passages marked §.
 4. The Burial (xxvii. 57—66).
Joseph's Tomb—§The Pharisees' Guard.
From *Mark-Gospel*; passages marked § from *Special Tradition*.
 5. The Resurrection; After Appearance (xxviii.).
The Messiah Risen—§Appearance to the Women—§False Report—§Appearance in Galilee—§Concluding Charge.
From *Mark-Gospel* and *Special Tradition*.

Regarded as a literary composition the structure of the Gospel shows a considerable amount of art of a simple kind, and such as is found in Jewish works of this period. This appears especially in the grouping of events and sayings, and is apt to take a numerical form; *e.g.* the seven miracles, seven parables, the Beatitudes, woes on the Pharisees, &c. The Evangelist shows a special fondness for arranging his subjects in pairs. Thus we may compare the two Gadarene demoniacs and the two blind men at Jericho, with the single demoniac and single blind Bartimæus of the other Gospels. When we observe that each of these cases goes along with the omission of some previous narrative (Matt. viii. 28 ff. with omission of Mark i. 21—28, and Matt. xx. 29 ff. with the omission of Mark viii. 22—26) the temptation lies near at hand to suppose that some principle of compensation has been at work. This, however, will not account for the two blind men of Matt. ix. 27—31, so far at least as the extant narratives enable us to judge. The mention of the colt as well as the ass in Matt. xxi. 2—7, appears to be due to the influence of Zech. ix. 9.

7. *Date and Early History of the Gospel.*—Not much need be added to what has been already said as to the date of the Gospel. It was complete in its present form, excepting possibly a few very slight expressions, before the final catastrophe of Jerusalem. The great mass of the contents of the Gospel are unaffected by this. The Temple and the altar are spoken of as if they were still standing; and the coming of the Son of Man is expected immediately after the culmination of the troubles of which the siege of Jerusalem formed a part. But if the whole Gospel was complete before the year 70 that would throw back the composition of the documents worked up in it some way into the decade 60—70. We may well believe the tradition that St. Matthew wrote down his collection of “Oracles” as he was in the act of quitting Jerusalem not later than the year 66. Any alteration introduced after A.D. 70 would seem to have been more of the nature of the freedom exercised by the early copyists than of a formal editorial revision.

The Gospel according to St. Matthew soon attained a wide circulation. For a long time it was the favourite Gospel. We may attribute this favour to the fact that at first especial stress was laid on the “sayings of the Lord,” and St. Matthew’s Gospel gave peculiar prominence to those “sayings.” Something also may be due to the circumstances under which the other Gospels were put into circulation. The Third Gospel, as we shall see, was addressed to an individual, and probably remained for some time in private hands. More or less clear quotations from

it or allusions to it occur by all the so-called Apostolic Fathers except Hermas. It is clearly presupposed by the recently discovered *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. In the Epistle of Barnabas a quotation from it is introduced by the significant "it is written," a phrase which though it implies authority, still does not exactly imply what we should call *canonical* authority, as apocryphal books are quoted in a similar manner. In the works of Justin quotations from St. Matthew hold a prominent place; and Tatian, the disciple of Justin, included it in his Diatessaron or Harmony of the Four Gospels. The collection of Four Gospels, and no more, was by this time well established, and apocryphal works were rapidly driven out of all competition with them. Among these four the first place was almost universally assigned to St. Matthew. The place of the other Gospels might vary, but that of St. Matthew came first in all the great and authoritative collections. The few exceptions are rather accidents of the MSS. than expressive of any deliberate opinion.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

1. *Early Statements respecting the Gospel.*—Papias has a statement in regard to the work of St. Mark quite as remarkable as that relating to St. Matthew. The passage is as follows:—

“This too the Presbyter said: Mark having become the interpreter of Peter wrote down what he remembered, accurately though not in order, of the things said and done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor had he been in His company, but at a later date, as I said, in the company of Peter, who adapted his teaching to the occasion, and not as though he were putting together a record of the sayings of the Lord: so that Mark did no wrong in setting down some things as he remembered them; for he was careful of one thing, not to omit anything of what he had heard or falsify it in any particular.” (*Euseb. H.E.* iii. 39.)

Here we are expressly told that Papias is drawing his information from some unnamed member of an older generation: he is not criticising the Gospel current under the name of St. Mark, but is only relating an historical fact as to the circumstances of St. Mark's authorship.

2. *Comparison of this Statement with our present Gospel.*—Again, then, we have to ask: Does this description fit the Gospel as it has come down to us? And again we are met by a problem of very considerable intricacy. What the extract from Papias leads us to expect is a string of anecdotes loosely strung together. We are expressly warned not to suppose that these anecdotes would make up a complete and formal biography, and we are prepared for finding in them a certain want of order. The first of these conditions our Gospel satisfies very well. It is easy to see that it is far from exhaustive. The events of a single day are treated with some degree of fulness, and a number of other more or less salient incidents stand out distinctly enough, but

there are often wide gaps between them, and we have only to turn to the Gospel of St. John to see how extensive and how important is the matter which is omitted. St. Mark says nothing about a Judean ministry; the acts of our Lord in no way turn with him round the Jewish feasts; the only feast which he mentions is the last passover; yet we might be sure that our Lord, as called upon "to fulfil all righteousness," would attend other feasts besides this, precisely as the fourth Gospel makes Him attend them.

3. *Order of the Narratives.*—So far all is satisfactory: the phenomena of the Gospel duly tally with the description given by Papias. But is this equally the case with the second condition—the absence of order? There are many who maintain with much show of reason that it is. The informant of Papias, they say, took as his standard some particular order—such as the order of St. Matthew, or the order of St. Luke, or the order of St. John. Either of the last two might well be taken; for St. Luke claims to write in order,* and St. John maps out his narrative by bold chronological landmarks which are wanting in the other Gospels. Judged by such standards as these the Gospel of St. Mark might seem to have no systematic order. And yet on the other hand, as we shall see presently, it has a very good disposition of its own.

It has a well-marked beginning and a well-marked ending, and the intervening narrative is laid out in such a way as to offer no glaring anachronism or inversion—the successful opening of the public ministry, the growing controversies, the excursions from Capernaum, Peter's confession followed by the first prophecy of death, the Transfiguration, the slow journey to Jerusalem, and so on. But the most remarkable phenomenon in regard to the order is how, whatever it may be in itself, it appears to supply the common outline for the order in the other two Gospels. The other Evangelists appear, roughly speaking, to follow the lead of St. Mark; where one deserts that lead (as St. Matthew does in the earlier part of the narrative and St. Luke in the later) the other keeps closely to it. In the middle for a short space the three diverge somewhat; but on the whole it may be said that while by assuming the order of St. Mark we can explain the order of St. Matthew and St. Luke, we cannot in like manner take either St. Matthew or St. Luke as a key to the two remaining narratives.

4. *Origin of the Gospel.*—There seems here to be some presumption, though not perhaps a decisive presumption, against

* Luke i. 3.

the complete identity of the notes described by Papias with our present Gospel. It would seem as if a further digesting and ordering process must have taken place between the death of St. Peter and the appearance of the Gospel in the form in which we have it. And yet the time allowed for this is very short.

If we follow the tradition, the death of St. Peter would fall at Rome in the year 67 or 68. If we still follow the tradition, St. Mark's notes were not set down in writing until after that event. Of course it is easy to throw over our authorities; but the tradition which they embody is early and fairly consistent, and it ought not to be abandoned unless we are sure that we have something better to put in its place. But then if we were right in supposing that the first Evangelist had before him the substance at least of St. Mark's Gospel digested and arranged at the time when he brought out the first Gospel as we have it, *i.e.* shortly before the catastrophe of A.D. 70, events must have marched at a rapid rate; in the meantime the notes of St. Peter's preaching must have been first written, then reduced to connected shape, then carried to Palestine, there combined with St. Matthew's "Oracles," the combined works also edited and published, all within the narrow space of three years.

That this may have been so is far from impossible. But must we not also say that it is far from certain? Events probably did move quickly. The time had at last come when the importance of these written narratives was fully realised. The Apostolic generation was fast passing away; crowds of eager Christians from the Jewish Dispersion and from Gentile lands were pressing into the Church and were asking for details of the life of Him whose name they bore. At a distance from the great shock in Palestine the end may not have seemed so near. These precious facts must not be suffered to fall into oblivion. We cannot wonder that, as St. Luke says, many had already begun to set down in writing such particulars as they could collect; nor can we wonder that a narrative associated from the first with such eminent names should quickly pass from one end of the Christian world to the other and be resorted to as one of the best of existing authorities; the reader must form his own opinion as to the probability of this. The whole round of questions to which it belongs is still *sub judice*.

5. *Date and Integrity of the Gospel.*—Traces of a date after the taking of Jerusalem in St. Mark's Gospel are extremely few. The outlines of that event still loom dimly and indistinctly all through the great prophetic chapter (Mark xiii.). Only in a single expression ("in those days," Mark xiii. 21, compared

with "immediately" Matt. xxiv. 29) does it seem as if a wider interval were left between the lesser catastrophe and the greater. So slight a change as this might be introduced after the publication of the Gospel, in the way in which other slight variations crept in, but not without betraying themselves in the extant MSS. The most conspicuous example of a passage, which seems to have been absent from the original text of the Gospel though very early appended to it, is supplied by the last twelve verses of the concluding chapter.

The genuineness of these verses is a well-known subject of controversy. They are wanting in two MSS., which are not only the oldest in date but are found in a very great number of instances to have preserved readings which there is strong reason to accept as the true ones. The Church historian Eusebius, who lived in the early part of the fourth century, and besides being the leading scholar of his day had access to the library of Origen, and may be so said to be at the centre of the critical situation, says expressly though in somewhat varying language, that the verses are not current "in some copies," "in the accurate copies," "in almost all the copies of the Gospel." Further, a few MSS. and a group of early and important versions have a different and shorter conclusion which clearly took the place of the longer in widely separated districts.

Surveying the whole of the evidence a delusive appearance of unanimity is seen to be given by the great mass of MSS. which support the verses. The farther we go back in time the slighter does the evidence for them become: from the second century Irenæus, whose work contains many certainly wrong readings, and perhaps Justin, who does not represent a pure Biblical text; from the third century no direct evidence, but only inferential evidence from data, which themselves belong to the fourth. An examination of the verses themselves confirms the conclusion thus suggested. They are found to be not continuous with the previous part of the chapter, but to involve an altogether new beginning. Thus considerations of external and of internal evidence alike converge to make us believe that the Gospel as at first issued was without them. For some reason or other, which we cannot now determine with certainty, the original Gospel ended abruptly; either it was not finished, or the last column or columns of writing were torn off or defaced, and the defect was made good in various ways, one early writer substituting the shorter conclusion, and another the longer as we now have it. The latter, if not taken from a written document, was adopted from the still living oral tradition; and, therefore, though the facts of the narrative have not quite so good a warranty as

those of the rest of the Gospel, they are not devoid of substantial attestation.

6. *The Author.*—The conjecture is not without a certain degree of probability that the young man who was looking on at our Lord's arrest and who fled "naked" (*i.e.* without his outer garment or "himation"), may have been the author of the Gospel. When persons otherwise unknown are mentioned in a narrative it is a fair inference that they stand in some special relation either to the author or to his informants. But we know from Acts xii. 12, that the house of St. Mark was in Jerusalem. His family must have held a good position. The house of his mother was a rendezvous for the Church, and his cousin, Barnabas, possessed landed property in Cyprus. It is even sometimes argued, and, again, not entirely without reason, that the house of Mary was the same in which our Lord held His Last Supper, and in which the disciples gathered after His Ascension.

In any case the young St. Mark stood in close relation to the leaders of the Church. St. Peter describes him as "his son," an expression which is no doubt to be taken in a spiritual sense, and his kinsman, Barnabas, introduced him to St. Paul. The two cousins started with St. Paul on his first missionary journey, and visited together the island of Cyprus, to which they would be attracted by the connection of Barnabas with the island. Here they separated, St. Mark for some unexplained reason returning to Jerusalem; either his courage failed him or else his stricter Jewish views may have received a shock from the liberality of St. Paul in his dealings with the Gentiles. For the time the breach was serious (Acts xv. 37, 38), but at a later date it was made up, and we find St. Mark in the company of St. Paul when he wrote the Epistles to Colossians, Philemon, and Timothy. Later still he is attached to St. Peter.

The ecclesiastical tradition of the second century laid great stress on this association. We have seen how Papias speaks of St. Mark as the "interpreter of St. Peter." Perhaps, as the context seems to suggest, his functions may have been rather those of "secretary." St. Peter appears to have possessed a fair degree of facility in Greek, though he may have needed help when it became necessary to write or discourse in Latin. The numerous Latinisms in the Gospel would lead us to suppose that St. Mark knew something of this language. The "interpreter-ship" becomes a fixed point in the later tradition, and so also is the intimate connection of the second Gospel with St. Peter. Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, refers to it in so many words as the "Memoirs of Peter." All agree that the preaching of the Apostle supplied the materials for the Gospel.

There is only a difference as to whether it was composed during his lifetime or after his death. The latter version has the earlier and better authority.

7. *Character, Style, and Doctrinal Standpoint of the Gospel.*—The influence of St. Peter is discernible on the Gospel. St. Mark himself was not an eye-witness, but he has caught something of the vividness and fulness of detail characteristic of an eye-witness. The paralytic who is healed at Capernaum is carried on his couch by "four" bearers, who "take up the tiles" probably of the corridor of the house where Jesus was, and so let down their patient into His presence. When He heals the withered hand He looks round Him "with anger." The Gadarene demoniac wanders about "among the tombs and among the mountains, crying out and cutting himself with stones." At the cleansing of the Temple not only are the buyers and the sellers turned out, but the further detail is added that no one is allowed to "carry a vessel" through the Temple.

In another way touches of nature appear in the narrative. At a distance from home the memory of St. Peter dwells fondly on particular expressions used by his Master in His own Aramaic speech ("Ephphatha," "Talitha Cumi" or "Cum"). Here, too, we have a verification of the tradition that the writer himself, as well as his informant, came from Palestine. A foreigner would never have thought of preserving such expressions; nor would tradition have preserved them long after it had begun to travel beyond Palestinian soil. On another side the tradition is confirmed when it speaks of Rome as the place where the Gospel was written. The Latin names to which we have referred are one proof of this; a still better is supplied by the incidental mention of "Rufus" (Mark xv. 21), who appears to be the same as the Rufus of Romans xvi. 13; pure Latin names are not common among the early Christians.

Attempts have been made to fix a dogmatic tendency upon the Gospel. All must agree that if there is any such tendency it is marked by great moderation. Hence the Evangelist has been claimed for opposite sides, by some as a representative of Pauline, by others as a representative of Jewish Christianity. He is really no partisan, though he reflects the conscience of the Church at the comparatively later period at which he is writing. The only object of the Gospel appears to be to give an adequate idea of the wondrous and wonder-working life of Christ. It is a filling-out of the programme sketched by St. Peter in Acts x. 37—41: "That saying ye yourselves know which was published throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, even Jesus of Nazareth, how that God

crowned Him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." It is a striking coincidence, and one that should not be forgotten in our estimate both of the speeches in the Acts, and of the traditions relating to the origin of the Gospels, that the report of this speech of St. Peter's agrees so well with the phenomena of the Petrine Gospel.

8. *Analysis of the Gospel.*—In accordance with this description of the Gospel we look in it rather for a simple, straightforward narrative of events than for the development of an abstract idea. No deeply cogitated scheme lies at the bottom of it. The order seems to be in the main and roughly speaking chronological, not from any deliberate aiming at chronology, for the author abandons this without hesitation whenever it suits him, but only because the events naturally fell into a sort of chronological sequence. Sometimes the sections of narrative are grouped according to their subject-matter (*e.g.* the two incidents relating to the Sabbath in ii. 23—iii. 6; the sayings in iv. 21—25, and the two parables which follow); but the grouping is not anything recondite or far-fetched; it is such a grouping as would almost come of itself.

At the same time this easy and natural arrangement is very instructive; it reflects better than any artificial system would do the actual course of events. In particular, the gradual development of belief and the gathering storms of opposition are clearly represented. If a like development may be traced in the other Gospels, it must be remembered that their outline is derived from St. Mark; but in none is the real sequence so little disturbed. It is possible that future inquiries may show that even St. Mark's Gospel is composite in its origin, and that all the traditions which it embodies are not drawn from the same source—St. Mark himself may have had access to other authorities besides St. Peter—but for our present purpose it must be treated as a single whole. It seems, as we have said, to have lain before the other two Evangelists in a form which differed but little from that which it still has in our Bibles.

The Public Life and Work of the Son of Man.

I. Introductory paragraph on the Mission of the Baptist (i. 1—8).

II. The Public Ministry of Jesus.

1. Baptism (Messianic anointing), and Temptation, summarily narrated (i. 9—13).

2. Beginning of Galilean ministry, dating from imprisonment of John (i. 14, 15).

3. Call of four apostles (i. 16—20).

4. Opening day of the ministry at Capernaum (i. 21—34).

5. Circuit of teaching in Galilee; the leper (i. 35—45).

6. Capernaum:

i. Rising opposition (ii. 1—iii. 6).

The Paralytic—Call of Levi—Fasting—Two Sabbath Anecdotes.

ii. Miracles and Teaching (iii. 7—iv. 34).

Crowds attracted—Choice of the Twelve—Casting out of Devils—Relatives of Jesus—Parables.

7. Various movements, with alternations of work and controversy.

i. Across the lake; Decapolis; Capernaum; Nazareth; a second circuit (iv. 35—vi. 13).

Storm at Sea—Gadarene Demoniac—Jairus's Daughter—Incredulity of Nazarenes—Mission of Apostles.

ii. Herod Antipas (vi. 14—29).

Effect on Herod—Parenthetical mention of Death of John.

iii. Across the lake; Gennesaret; longer journey through Tyre and Sidon; Decapolis; further side of the lake (Dalmanutha?); Bethsaida (vi. 30—viii. 26).

Feeding of Five Thousand—Walking on the Sea—Healings—Controversy with Pharisees from Jerusalem—The Syro-Phœnician Woman—The Deaf and Dumb—Feeding of Four Thousand—A Sign—Leaven of the Pharisees—Blind Man Healed.

8. Culmination of the Galilean ministry.

i. Cæsarea Philippi (viii. 27—ix. 29).

Peter's Confession—First Announcement of the Passion—Taking the Cross—The Transfiguration—The Epileptic Boy.

ii. Return to Capernaum (ix. 30—50).

Second Announcement of the Passion—"Who shall be greatest?"—"Not against us, for us"—Offences.

9. Last journey to Jerusalem.

i. On the way through Peræa (x. 1—45).

Bill of Divorce—Little Children—Rich young Man—Third Announcement of the Passion—The Sons of Zebedee.

ii. Jericho (x. 46—52). Blind Bartimæus.

iii. Jerusalem and Bethany (xi.—xiii.).

Triumphal Entry—Return to Bethany—Barren Fig-tree—Cleansing of the Temple—Discourses in the Temple: Authority of Jesus—Labourers in the Vineyard—Tribute to Cæsar—Levirate Marriage—The great Commandment—David's Lord—The Scribes—The Widow's Mite—Apocalyptic Discourse.

III. The Passion and Resurrection.

1. Preparations for the end: two days before the Passover (xiv. 1—11).

The Plot—Anointing for Burial—Treachery of Judas.

2. The last Supper (xiv. 12—31).

The Paschal Meal—Betrayal foretold—Institution of the Eucharist—Peter's Denial foretold.

3. Arrest, trial, and crucifixion (xiv. 32—xv. 41).

Gethsemane—The Arrest—Trial before the High Priest—Peter's Fall—Trial before Pilate—The Sentence—Mockery—Simon of Cyrene—The Crucifixion—Witnesses of the Crucifixion.

4. The Burial (xv. 42—47).

5. The Resurrection (xvi. 1—8).

The Women and the Empty Grave.

6. Supplemental summary of Appearances after the Resurrection (xvi. 9—20). (Probably an early addition to the Gospel and perhaps substituted for a lost section.)

9. *Early History of the Gospel*.—It was not unnatural that the shortest of the three Gospels, which contained hardly any matter peculiar to itself, should be overshadowed by the two longer works which circulated along with it. The possessor of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke would find in them nearly all that he would find in St. Mark and more besides. He would make the closest study of the Gospels from which he learnt the most, and he would quote from those with which he was most familiar. Yet there is clear proof that Justin was acquainted with our Gospel. He refers to the name "Boanerges," which it alone mentions, as contained in the "Memoirs of Peter." The constant tradition, to which reference has been made, shows that he means the work of Peter's secretary. Tatian, the disciple of Justin, included the Gospel in his Fourfold Harmony. The mutilated beginning of the Muratorian Fragment (*circa* 180) probably contained a more explicit account of it. It is referred to quite unequivocally by Irenæus, who, as we have seen, is the first to assign to it one of the Evangelic symbols. Irenæus gave it the eagle, later tradition the lion. From Tatian onwards there can be no doubt that its place was fixed as one of the sacred and authoritative four.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

1. *The Preface to the Gospel.*—For St. Luke we miss the valuable but perplexing evidence of Papias. No saying of his in regard to the third Gospel has been handed down to us, and for an express mention of St. Luke as the author we have to wait until Irenæus and the Muratorian Fragment towards the end of the second century. But if until that time the author remains anonymous, in regard to the circumstances under which the Gospel was composed, we possess evidence better and more assuredly authentic even than that of Papias, viz., the evidence of the Evangelist himself. Writing like a man of larger culture than the other two synoptists, he begins his Gospel in the approved literary manner by a brief preface, in which he explains the object and sources of his work and his relation to his predecessors. It is true that this is done in general terms which leave room for much uncertainty in detail, but making all allowance for this the information given is of value.

We learn then that the writer of the Gospel is one degree removed from the events, and belongs to what might be called the second generation of Christians. He had not himself been present at the events, but he had obtained his account of them partly from those who had, partly from others who had been indirectly connected with them, having been occupied with the preaching of Christianity which rested upon them. With the help of these authorities he claims to possess a full and accurate knowledge of the whole history, and to reproduce it in regular order from first to last. But that this order is necessarily chronological would be too much to assert, and there are certainly some incidents (such as the visit to Nazareth, Luke iv, 16—30) where the order of St. Luke is inferior to that of the other two Gospels.

We learn further that others had tried before this to put together written narratives which were, however, not altogether

satisfactory. At least it is clear that the author of the preface thought that he could improve upon them. On the question whether or not these attempted Gospels included the canonical St. Matthew and St. Mark we shall have a word to say presently. The preface is addressed, as it would seem, to a private individual, who from the epithet applied to him would appear to be a person of rank, named Theophilus. Nothing is known of any such person, and the view has not wanted defenders—including, though with some reserve, the late Bishop of Durham in his article on the Acts in the second edition of the Dictionary of the Bible—that the name Theophilus represents a fictitious personality, and is intended to stand for the devout Christian in general, much as in the late Bishop Wordsworth's *Theophilus Anglicanus*. It is, however, an objection to this view that the epithet of which we have just spoken is distinctly appropriated to official personages, and therefore would hardly be in place as applied to the average Christian.

It seems, therefore, better to suppose that some influential person otherwise unknown to history is meant. He was already a Christian, and already had had the outlines of the narrative set before him in that course of oral instruction which was undergone by the candidates for baptism. His curiosity was, however, not yet satisfied, and in this he is typical of the large class for whom our Gospels were written. The teaching of the first generation of Christians had been in the main doctrinal, turning upon a few salient points, such as the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. But there was a growing desire, especially among the Gentile converts, to know more of the details of the life of the Messiah; and this desire both the Gospel before us and the attempts which it superseded were intended to meet.

2. *The Author of the Gospel.*—Who was the author of this anonymous work? Ecclesiastical tradition has seen in him consistently St. Luke, the beloved physician, one of the companions of St. Paul. The earliest date at which this tradition appears in writing was, as we have said, the latter years of the second century, when expression is given to it by Irenæus and the Fragment on the Canon. From that time onwards it is abundantly attested; nor is the delay of a hundred years anything abnormal. Up to the time of Irenæus the stream of Christian literature outside the New Testament is so scanty that many facts, the memory of which must have been continuously preserved, find their first mention at that period. The tradition of St. Luke's authorship is also supported by the absence of any divergent tradition, nor was the name prominent enough to offer a strong attraction to those who, at the end of the second century, were eager to find

apostolic authority for their own opinions, and for the documents which gave countenance to them.

On all these grounds the tradition comes to us with a strong presumption in its favour, and that presumption is heightened by the argument based on the certain identity of the author of the third Gospel with the author of the Acts. We must not go into this question here. Suffice it to say that it is still by far the most probable view that the Book of Acts was really written by a companion of St. Paul, who was included in the group spoken of as "we" in Acts xvi. 10, and many places afterwards. There are only three possibilities: either the writer was really one of St. Paul's companions; or a diary written by one of St. Paul's companions has been incorporated into the book; or some other person has sought to pass for a companion of St. Paul's, and has deliberately given his narrative the colour of proceeding from such a companion. All these views have been held, but in England the balance of opinion still is, and is likely to be, decidedly in favour of the first. And if it is once agreed that the anonymous writer was one who had accompanied St. Paul on his journeys, then it has been elaborately proved that no other name satisfies the conditions so well as St. Luke's, so much so that even those who do not ascribe the whole book to him, still for the most part either see in him the author of the incorporated diary, or else believe that it was sought to suggest his authorship. Taking the question as a whole the present writer is of opinion that, except for the Pauline Epistles, as strong a case can be made out for the traditional authorship of the third Gospel and the Acts as for that of any other book of the New Testament.

As to the personality of St. Luke, what we really know of him is derived from the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul. He was a physician by profession, and is first found in the company of St. Paul when he decided to cross over from Asia Minor to Europe. Together they sailed from Troas, and together they arrived at Neapolis and Philippi. Here, if we may argue from the dropping of the first person in the narrative, St. Luke was left, perhaps through some private connection with the place, though the inference drawn by M. Renan that he was a native of Philippi has not enough to bear it out. At Philippi he would seem to have stayed, or at least to have made it his headquarters, throughout the interval, which, on a probable chronology, would extend from the year 54 to 58, for it can hardly be a chance coincidence that the first person plural is resumed (Acts xx. 5) in the narrative of the Acts from St. Paul's arrival at the same point on his return journey from Greece, when he was on his way to attend the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem.

From this time onwards St. Luke remains with him, so far as we can gather, to the end of the Apostle's life. The Acts represent them as travelling together all the way, first to Cæsarea and then to Rome. St. Luke is still there at the writing of the Epistles to Colossians and Philemon, and he is the Apostle's sole stay at the time when he wrote his last Epistle (2 Tim. iv. 11). Now he disappears and the rest is conjecture. If we are to believe Eusebius, St. Luke was a native of Antioch. This may, however, have arisen from a confusion with Lucius of Cyrene, mentioned in Acts xiii. 1, just as Origen appears to identify him with the Lucius of Rom. xvi. 21. But the name Luke, though equivalent to Lucanus, is not properly the same name as Lucius. The notion that Lucanus is the same name as Silvanus is a mere fancy, and the tradition that St. Luke was a painter as well as a physician is quite late and of no value. Neither can he have been, as Epiphanius would give us to understand, one of the Seventy. The Seventy were both "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," from whom the Evangelist expressly distinguishes himself.

3. *Sources of the Gospel.*—If the author of the third Gospel was really St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul, then his historical position is fixed at once. Christian antiquity, from Tertullian onwards, always regarded this Gospel as representing the Apostle of the Gentiles. Eusebius even mentions, as having some currency in his day, the foolish idea that when St. Paul speaks of "my Gospel" (as in Romans ii. 16), he means the Gospel of St. Luke. It would be clear from this that St. Luke would obtain much of his information—not exactly from St. Paul himself, for St. Paul had to depend upon others for the facts of the Gospel history (1 Cor. xv. 3)—but at least in the *entourage* of St. Paul. The influence of St. Paul is seen rather in the general tone and standpoint of the Gospel than in the narrative of particular facts.

The one conspicuous instance of a parallelism of the latter kind turns upon a very doubtful reading. A marked resemblance exists in the ordinary texts between the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper as given by St. Luke, and that in 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25; but the best critics are of opinion that the greater part of the verses Luke xxii. 19, 20—all that follows the words, "This is my body" down to "which is shed for you"—has been introduced into the text of St. Luke from the Epistle. The passage is wanting in a group of MSS., mainly Latin or Græco-Latin, which represent an extremely ancient text; and the common reading, though found in the large mass of authorities, raises considerable difficulties by dividing the account of the

institution of the cup, or making it repeated twice over. That the narrative should have been filled out at a very early date by borrowing from the language of St. Paul is in accordance with other phenomena of the text, and is a hypothesis by no means improbable. This would reduce the points of special contact with St. Paul to the mention of the appearance of the risen Lord to St. Peter (Luke xxiv. 34, compared with 1 Cor. xv. 5), which is without doubt something more than a chance coincidence. Other supposed points of contact cannot be pressed.

When St. Luke's Gospel comes to be examined in detail it is found possible to map out its contents according to the probable sources from which they were derived. Especially is this the case if we may accept as probable the theory as to the origin and composition of the Synoptic Gospels which has been put forward in the previous chapters. In part the composition of St. Luke would be parallel to that of St. Matthew. If we lop off from both the first two and the latter half of the last chapters, then what remains will be found to have the same fundamental structure. The outline of the narrative appears to be supplied by a document closely resembling, if not identical with, our present St. Mark. In this are inserted masses of discourse which we may believe to have been taken from the original "Oracles" of St. Matthew. If this were the case we should then know two at least of the "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" to whom St. Luke expresses his obligations; they would not be excluded by the fact that their testimony is spoken of as "delivered," a word which in the Greek is most commonly used of oral tradition.

The tradition to which St. Luke refers was partly written and partly oral, and the Gospel of St. Mark and Oracles of St. Matthew did not make up the whole of it. Two other sources at least are discernible in the narrative as it has come down to us. The first two chapters (deducting the Preface) stand by themselves. They are full of Hebraising expressions which give them a stamp of their own; such would be "walking in the commandments and ordinances," "stricken in years," "great in the sight of the Lord," "filled with the Holy Ghost," "spirit and power of Elias," "take away my reproach," "hast found favour with God," &c. These two chapters then we may mark off as having a special source of their own, which was probably in writing. Most of the occasions of which we hear of St. Luke have their scene at a distance from Palestine; but at one time he would seem to have been for fully two years within the limits of the Roman province which bore that name. He accompanied St. Paul on his last recorded journey to Jerusalem, stayed with him for some time at the house of Philip the "Evangelist" at

Cæsarea, went up with him to Jerusalem, and, as we infer, remained not far away from his person during the time of his later confinement at Cæsarea.

Though Philip was not an "Evangelist" precisely in the sense in which we now give the name to St. Luke, but rather as an itinerant preacher or missionary than the author of a written Gospel, still he too would have to make inquiries for facts as to the life of the Lord, and in his company it is very possible that St. Luke may have met others who would be able to give him information more or less at first hand. We are not without indications as to one of the quarters from which such information came. St. Luke displays a special knowledge of matters relating to the court of the Herods. He mentions by name a woman whom none of the other Evangelists mention: "Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward:"* and in like manner in the Acts he speaks of Manaen "foster-brother of Herod." Here we have a glimpse of a circle from which St. Luke probably got his account of the quarrel and reconciliation between Pilate and Herod, as well as of the circumstances of the death of Herod Agrippa I., and of facts relating to Agrippa II.†

One slight indication would perhaps suggest that we owe to the same source the narrative of the walk to Emmaus; the name Cleopas (short for Cleopatros) is just such as would be affected in the surroundings of the Herodian court. Herod the Great at one time greatly curried favour with Antony and Cleopatra, and such a name might well descend among the dependants of his house. The name (unlike Cleopas, which may = Alphæus) was not one which would be borne by a strict Jew. This Herodian source may very possibly have been oral. St. Luke has besides this a quantity of peculiar matter in regard to which it is difficult to say how far it came from a single source, and how far from a number of sources. To some extent the peculiar portions are similar in subject. Thus we have a number of incidents relating to Samaritans.‡ We have some typical cases of the dealings of Christ with publicans and sinners;§ and also examples of His teaching as to the admission of the outcast and penitent.|| On the other hand, the opposition of riches and poverty is strongly brought out;¶ and occasionally narratives are inserted with a

* Luke viii. 3; compare Acts xiii. 1.

† Luke xxiii. 7—12; Acts xii. 20—23; xxv. 13, &c.

‡ Luke ix. 51—56; x. 30—37; xvii. 11—18.

§ Luke vii. 36—50; xix. 1—10.

|| Luke xv. 1—7; 8—10, 11—32; xviii. 9—14.

¶ Luke i. 52, 53; vi. 20, 21; xvi. 19—31.

strongly Jewish cast, like those of the "daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound" with a spirit of infirmity.*

4. *Character, Style, and Analysis of the Contents of the Gospel.*—Owing to this diversity of origin of its different parts, the Gospel presents a many-coloured appearance, now seeming to favour one set of views and now another. Rich and profound teaching, such as that which the Evangelist records, presented a number of different sides, of which different minds would take hold. The course of events and the evolution of history would throw light upon sayings which had at first lain dormant and attracted little attention. The first collectors of the evangelical traditions would vary much in their own standpoint and width of outlook. Some would contemplate the past, others the future; some would be intent on their own immediate surroundings, others would lift up their eyes to a more distant horizon; some would think rather of the Jews and of Palestine, others of the growing Gentile Church and of the wider destinies of the world. These differences were impressed on the materials of which St. Luke made use, and he has faithfully reproduced them. He is like the householder in the parable who brings out of his treasures "things new and old." He has his own leanings, and those leanings appear in the Gospel. The predominant tone is such as we should expect in the companion and disciple of St. Paul. Most characteristic is that chapter (xv.) which contains the parables of the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, the lost or prodigal son. It is not the outcasts of Palestine alone who are in view, but those dispersed abroad throughout the world. These delicate and tender pictures are no inventions. They lay in a side room apart from the public gallery of the first age, and the preceding evangelists had passed them by. St. Luke brought them out never again to be lost sight of. Yet he, too, sets by their side pieces conceived in another spirit, touches of particularism which had escaped his predecessors. He is a true historian who collects what he can wherever he finds it.

St. Luke has more literary ambition than his fellows. He spreads his canvas more elaborately and more after the manner of the secular artists. He alone endeavours to connect the Gospel narrative with the annals of the province of Syria and the Roman empire. It is a mistake to say that he had read Josephus; but Josephus is not the only authority who dealt with the Roman government of Judea and its border territories. At Antioch, at Cæsarea, at Rome, he would have abundant opportunities of becoming acquainted with the *fasti* of the province or

* Luke xiii. 11—17.

provinces of which it fell to him to treat. In this way he has come to speak of the census of Quirinius, the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, Lysanias of Abilene, and the like. All his data may not be exactly right; he had not the facilities of one who enjoyed the favour of emperors like Josephus, or who belonged to the foremost Roman aristocracy like Tacitus; but he made, at least, a conscientious attempt, and the historical details of the Acts show that he attained a high standard of success.

These are some of the characteristics of the Gospel, of which we may now proceed to give a brief analysis, bearing, as far as we can, those characteristics in mind.

History of the Life on Earth of the Saviour of the World.

I. Preface, explaining the sources and object of the Gospel (i. 1—4).

II. Birth and early years of the Saviour and His Forerunner (i. 5—ii. 52).

Announcement of the Birth of John and of Jesus—Birth of John—Birth of Jesus at the first Census of Quirinius—His Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple—Visit to the Temple at the age of twelve years.

From peculiar source or sources.

III. Judean Ministry of the Saviour.

Following for the most part the outline of St. Mark. Note that St. Luke uses Judean in a wide sense so as to include Galilee.

1. The Mission of the Baptist (iii. 1—20).

The fifteenth year of Tiberius—Preaching of John—His Prophecy of Christ—Notice of his Death.

From *Mark-Gospel*, with enlargement perhaps from *Oracles*.

2. Inauguration of the Ministry of Jesus (iii. 21—iv. 13).
Baptism of Jesus—Genealogy—Temptation.

Mark-Gospel, special source, and *Oracles*.

3. Jesus in Galilee (iv. 14—44).

Preaching in Galilee—Discourse at Nazareth and Incredulity of Nazarenes (antedated)—Settlement at Capernaum—A Day's Ministry—Circuit.

Mark-Gospel, with special source for Discourse.

4. Narrative continued (v. 1—vi. 15).

Call of four Apostles—the Leper—The Paralytic—Call of Levi—Fasting—Two Sabbath Anecdotes.

Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*, first subject expanded from special source.

5. The so-called Lesser Interpolation. Discourses, Miracles of Healing, and other incidents not all connected with Galilee (vi. 12—viii. 3).

*Choice of the Twelve—†Sermon on the Mount (“level place” St. Luke)—†Centurion’s Servant—§Widow’s Son at Nain—†Question and Character of John—§Jesus’ feet anointed—§The Ministering Women.

Passage marked with * from *Mark-Gospel*, those marked † probably from *Oracles*, those marked § from sources peculiar to St. Luke.

6. Narrative continued (viii. 4—56).

Parable of the Sower—Relations of Jesus—Storm at Sea—Gadarene Demoniac.

From *Mark-Gospel*, perhaps with slight influence from *Oracles* in earlier portion.

7. Height of the Galilean Ministry (ix. 1—50).

Mission of the Twelve—Effect on Herod—Feeding of Five Thousand—Peter’s Confession—First Announcement of Passion—Taking the Cross—Transfiguration—The Epileptic Boy—Second Announcement of Passion—“Who shall be greatest?”—“Not against us, for us.”

Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*.

IV. The Greater Interpolation, consisting largely of matter peculiar to St. Luke (ix. 51—xviii. 14).

This is sometimes called the “Peræan Section” or “Samaritan Section” because of ix. 51—56; x. 30—37; xvii. 11—19.

1. First Section (ix. 51—xiii. 35).

i. §The Samaritan Village—†Followers—§The Seventy—†Chorazin and Bethsaida—§†Return of Seventy—*The Greatest Commandment—§The Good Samaritan—§Mary and Martha.

ii. †§Prayer—*†Casting out Devils by Beelzebub—§True Blessedness—Sign of Jonah—†Lamp of the Body—†The Pharisees denounced—†Boldness in Confession—§The Inheritance—§The Rich Fool—†Cares—†Treasures—†Watchful Servants—†“Not peace but division.”

iii. §The Slaughtered Galileans—§Parable of Fig-tree—§Spinal Curvature healed—*Mustard Seed—†Leaven—†“Who are the saved?”—Departure from Galilee: §Message to Antipas—†Jerusalem.

2. Second Section (xiv. 1—xvii. 10.)

i. §Dropsy Healed—§Banquets—†The Messianic Banquet—

- †§ Counting the Cost—†The Lost Sheep—§The Lost Drachma—§The Lost Son.
 ii. §The Clever Steward—†Short Sayings—§Rich Man and Lazarus—*Offences—*Faith—§Servants' duties.
 iii. §The Samaritan Leper—§†Coming of the Kingdom—§The Unrighteous Judge—§Pharisee and Publican.

Passages marked * mainly from *Mark-Gospel*, those marked † mainly from *Oracles*, those marked § peculiar; combined signs denote combination of sources.

V. Journey to Jerusalem completed; Jesus in Jerusalem and at the Mount of Olives (xviii. 15—xxi. 22).

- i. Little Children—The Rich Young Man—Third Announcement of the Passion—Blind Man at Jericho—§Zacchæus—§The Minæ—Triumphal entry—Lament over Jerusalem—Cleansing of the Temple.
 ii. Authority of Jesus—Wicked Husbandmen—Tribute to Cæsar—Levirate Marriage—David's Son and Lord—The Scribes—The Widow's Mite—Apocalyptic Discourse.

Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*; passages marked § peculiar.

VI. Passion and Resurrection of the Saviour (xxii. 1—xxiv. 12).

1. Two days before Passover (xxii. 1—6).
 Treachery of Judas.
 2. The Last Supper (xxii. 7—38).
 The Paschal Meal—Institution of the Eucharist—Betrayal prophesied—"Who shall be greatest?"—Prophecy of Peter's Denial—§A Turning-point.
 3. Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion (xxii. 39—xxiii. 49).
 Gethsemane: §The Agony—Arrest—Peter's Denial—Trial of Jesus before the Presbytery—Trial before Pilate—§Jesus sent to Herod—Sentence—Simon of Cyrene—§Daughters of Jerusalem—Crucifixion: §The two Criminals—Witnesses of the Crucifixion.
 4. The Burial (xxiii. 50—56).
 5. The Resurrection: After-Appearances (xxiv.).
 Women at the Empty Grave—§Walk to Emmaus—§Appearance to Simon—§Appearance to the Eleven—§(The Ascension?).

Main outline from *Mark-Gospel*; passages marked § peculiar.

5. *Date and Early History of the Gospel.*—We have already seen that the Gospel was probably composed about the year 80 A.D., during the period which St. Luke himself calls "the times of the Gentiles" (xxi. 24), *i.e.* the period ushered in by the fall of Jerusalem, during which the Gentiles were to be the appointed ministers of Divine vengeance. We have also seen

that the Gospel was written, in the first instance, for a private person named Theophilus. That this was its original destination is confirmed by the apparent significance of some remarkable phenomena in the text. The Gospel appears at a very early date to have undergone certain additions, which have left traces of themselves in the MSS. The additions in question would seem from the authorities which support them to have been made at two distinct times.

On one occasion there were only added the two verses which describe the agony of the Saviour as "drops of blood" in the garden of Gethsemane (xxii. 43—44), and those most important and precious words—which are certainly authentic as a statement of fact, whatever their textual character—the prayer for forgiveness of those who caused His death (xxiii. 34).^{*} On the other occasion a longer string of additions was made. Foremost among them would be in all probability the insertion of words borrowed from 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, expanding the account of the institution of the Eucharist (xxii. 19, 20), and the words describing the Ascension ("and He was carried up into heaven," xxiv. 51), with several other less important phrases in Chapter xxiv.

Both these sets of additions were introduced at such an early date that some (including Bishop Lightfoot) have supposed that St. Luke himself actually issued two editions of his Gospel. It appears, however, to satisfy the conditions rather better, if we suppose that they were introduced after they had left the hands of the evangelist, but so soon after that the most natural person to think of in connection with them is, if not the writer of the Gospel, yet the person to whom the Gospel was written, the "most excellent Theophilus." Additions like these are just such as would be made by the private possessor of a written narrative, who, after it was received, fell in with some additional incidents which came to him with good authentication, or who thought himself justified in filling out a point here and there by a process of legitimate inference. Such an one would think that he was only doing what he would with his own; that he himself was the gainer; and that no harm could possibly come from his zeal. And we at this distance of time, may in most cases heartily endorse his action, and express our gratitude to him for preserving words which we should indeed not willingly "let die."

If we may carry our speculations a step farther we should say, putting together what we know of the origin of the particular

* This addition perhaps belongs rather to the next class.

group of MSS. in which the second class of additions is absent, with the official title "most excellent," and the tradition connecting St. Luke with Antioch, that Antioch itself was the most probable residence of Theophilus, and that he is likely to have been in some way or other attached to the staff of the "legatus" of Syria. These are conjectures, but to the student of the text they will, it is thought, possess rather more foundation than appears upon the face of them.

After the death of Theophilus the process of grafting on small additions to the Gospel, partly by way of inference and comparison with the other Gospels which were now circulating in the neighbourhood of it, but partly also drawn from the not yet exhausted strain of oral tradition, still continued. One conspicuous instance of it we may mention. Numerous copies of the Gospel had been made and dispersed abroad—the parent lines of our present text had been already laid—when in a single copy there was inserted after vi. 4, the following anecdote which could hardly have been derived from any other source than living tradition: "On the same day, seeing one at work on the Sabbath, He said to him, 'O man, if thou knowest what thou doest thou art blessed, but if thou knowest not thou art accursed and a transgressor of the law.'" To illustrate which we may compare St. Paul in Romans xiv. 23, 25: "Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because (he eateth) not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin." In other words, an act done from sincere and full conviction may be justified, when, if done from any lesser motive, it would be condemned. The copy in which the insertion first appeared was probably still made somewhere in the region of Antioch, but more in a corner than those of which we have been speaking. It may be seen to this day in the famous MS. presented by Beza to the University of Cambridge.

Unequivocal proofs of an extensive use of St. Luke's Gospel in quarters far remote from that to which it was originally addressed meet us as we approach the middle of the second century. The heretic writer Marcion, from the province of Pontus, which stretches along the shores of the Black Sea on the north of Asia Minor, accepted only a single Gospel, which he cut down to somewhat reduced dimensions by removing everything which seemed to conflict with his own peculiar doctrines. That Gospel was our present St. Luke. At one time it was thought that Marcion's shorter Gospel might be the original, and our own Gospel an expansion, but this view is now generally given up. Not only did Marcion use our present Gospel, but there is evi-

dence to show that he used it in a text which already, even at that early date, bore traces of corruption. The Gospel which he used about the year 140 cannot have been a new production, but must have been current for a considerable time and have passed through a number of hands.

A little later than Marcion (*circa* 150) Justin Martyr also certainly used our present Gospel, and in his time it already contained the verses describing the Bloody Sweat which we have some reason to think were not in the original copy. It was one of the four works which went to make up the "Diatessaron" of Tatian, Justin's disciple (160—170). When we come to the Muratorian Fragment we have an account of the origin of the Gospel, which seems to be made up from Scriptural data but is proof of the estimation in which the Gospel was held. When the corrupt text is emended it appears to run thus: "The third book of the Gospel, 'according to Luke,' Luke the physician, composed after the Ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him with him as the companion of his journeying, in his own name from hearsay (he had not himself seen the Lord in the flesh), and as best he could, beginning with the birth of John." With Tatian, the Fragmentist, and Irenæus the Gospel is already what we should call "canonical," and it does not go back from this position.

THE WRITINGS ASCRIBED TO ST. JOHN.

1. *Tradition as to Authorship.*—The traditional belief of the Christian Church, dating from the earliest times, ascribes the authorship of five of the New Testament books to the Apostle John. Of these five, the Gospel and the First Epistle are classed by Eusebius ("Ecc. Hist." iii. 25) as undisputed books, whose authority was recognised by all the churches throughout the world. We shall presently discuss a further statement of Eusebius, viz., that John wrote his Gospel with a knowledge of what the other three Evangelists had written, and with the intention of supplementing their narratives. A tradition to this effect had been recorded by Clement of Alexandria about the end of the second century.

The external testimony to the Second and Third Epistles is less strong. The very early citations of them are scanty, and yet perhaps as numerous as can reasonably be expected in the case of documents so short and presenting so little matter for quotation. It is likely that, being private letters addressed to individuals, they were for some little time not included in the public reading of the Church. And the letters being anonymous there was room for individual speculation as to who the writer might be who describes himself as "the Elder." But we shall presently see good reason for acquiescing in the prevalent opinion, all dissent from which soon died out, that the writer was the same as the author of the Gospel and of the First Epistle.

The four books just enumerated are all anonymous, and our knowledge of their authorship rests on independent tradition; but the fifth book, that of the Revelation, itself gives its author's name as John; and so early as the middle of the second century the book is cited by Justin Martyr as the work of John the Apostle. In respect of antiquity of attestation few New Testament books stand more favourably; but after a time the authority of the book came to be disputed, less, however, because of any

good grounds for questioning the earlier tradition as to its authorship than because the contents of the book were not acceptable to many Christian readers. But by the end of the fourth century all opposition had died out, and the book has been for centuries universally accepted in the Christian Church as the record of a divine revelation made to one of the twelve apostles. In modern times all the traditional opinions concerning the authorship of the New Testament books have been subjected to free examination by critics who own no high respect for Church authority. Under this examination the Apocalypse has fared better than some other books of the Church canon, this book being recognised as St. John's by many critics who refuse the like acknowledgment in the case of the four other books traditionally ascribed to the same author.

In the present introduction we have thought it advisable to confine ourselves to topics on which the mere English reader is competent to pass judgment. We therefore do not attempt to produce in full the testimony of early Christian Fathers, in order to appreciate which some learned discussion would be necessary as to the meaning of the passages cited, and as to the credit due to the writers. We shall content ourselves with testing by internal evidence the various points of the traditional belief. It is necessary to begin by examining whether the five books with which we have to deal have been rightly ascribed to the same author, because on the determination of this question depends whether inferences drawn from one of these books can properly be combined with those drawn from another.

2. *Common Authorship of Gospel and First Epistle.*—If it is possible to prove anything by internal evidence the identity of authorship of these two works may be regarded as certain. The similarity of style and phraseology, though no doubt more striking in the original, is obvious enough in a translation. No style presents more marked peculiarities than that of the Fourth Gospel. The most careless reader is conscious of the difference when he passes on to this Gospel from the study of the preceding three, and equally so when he passes on from this Gospel to the Epistles of St. Paul or St. James or St. Peter. If he proceeds to examine wherein the peculiarity consists, he finds among other things that in the Fourth Gospel each sentence usually stands by itself, and that while there is continuity of thought there is little in form of expression. The sentences are linked together only as the propositions in Euclid are linked together, where, though one proposition prepares the way for those that come after, yet it is complete in itself, and there is nothing in its enunciation to indicate that others are to follow.

Thus St. John's style may be compared to that of the old uncial MSS., in which each letter is a capital not joined on to any other. The Evangelist does not write like an advocate bound to prove his case by argument, but he assumes the tone of a teacher whose bare word is enough to satisfy his hearers. He makes a statement; then, when his hearers have had time to ponder on it, he goes on to make another, suggested by something he has said, in which some idea that he has expressed is enlarged or supplemented. Very frequently the second sentence follows the former without any connecting particle, or with at most the conjunction "and."

(i.) We are at once struck with this characteristic of style on reading the opening verses of the Gospel, which consist of a number of short sentences connected by no particle but "and." The same characteristic prevails all through the First Epistle. It will be a sufficient example to take the last three verses of the first chapter and the opening verses of the second, where we have some sentences standing independent, others connected only with "and": "*And if any man sin*"; "*And he is the propitiation*"; "*And hereby we do know.*" One of the "ands" in the first chapter (verse 5) deserves notice, because the Authorised Version has not preserved this peculiarity of style. It renders "*This then is the message,*" but the Revised Version has literally "*and this is the message,*" the form of expression being strikingly parallel to that at the beginning of the Gospel (i. 19), "*And this is the witness of John.*" See also "*and this is his commandment*" (1 John iii. 23); "*and this is the witness*" (1 John v. 11.).

(ii.) But though the sentences in the Gospel are slightly connected by particles, they are united in a more intimate way, succeeding sentences being constantly pervaded by the same thought, and often the same word running on through several successive verses. Thus observe how the word "witness" runs through the verses (John v. 31—39). The Epistle is full of instances of the same characteristic. The same word "witness" runs through 1 John v. 6—11, where, though in the Authorised Version the translators sometimes substitute the word "record," both represent the same word in the original. In like manner observe how the word "love" runs through the verses v. 7—12.

(iii.) Again, it is a habit of the Evangelist to express an idea both positively and negatively. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made" (i. 3); "he confessed and denied not" (i. 20); "shall not perish but have everlasting life" (iii. 15, 16), &c. Instances of the same habit are numerous in the Epistle. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at

all" (i. 5); "is truth and is no lie" (iii. 27), &c. In connection with the second example it may be added that both in Gospel and Epistle we find the statement that a proposition is true, supplemented by the statement that to assert the opposite would be to tell a lie (John viii. 55; 1 John i. 6, 8; ii. 4, 22; iv. 20). Compare also Rev. ii. 2; iii. 9.

(iv.) The words and phrases which are favourites with the Evangelist are also prominent in the Epistle. We have already had some instances of this. For example, the word "witness," already noticed, may be said to be one of those favourite words. It is comparatively rare in the Synoptic Gospels, but either the noun or the corresponding verb occurs some fifty times in the Fourth Gospel. It is needless to say what a prominent place the word "love" holds, both in Gospel and Epistle; and we cannot be wrong in finding in the "commandment" of love, 1 John iv. 21, a reference to the "new commandment," John xiii. 34, for the "new commandment" is expressly mentioned, 1 John ii. 8. So likewise the contrast between those who "abide in the light" and those who "walk in darkness," 1 John i. 6, 7; ii. 9, 11, has not only its counterpart in the Gospel, iii. 19; viii. 12; xi. 9; xii. 46, but the very same words are found both in Gospel and Epistle, "He that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John viii. 35; 1 John ii. 11).

The same contrast is also in both books spoken of as one between "death" and "life"; and here too, in identical words, "have passed from death unto life" (John v. 24; 1 John iii. 14). "Eternal life" is the constantly recurring theme in both books, and of this life not only is our Lord described in the Gospel as the source, but He is given the title "the Life" (John i. 3; xi. 25; xiv. 6). At the very beginning of the Epistle we have (i. 2) "the Life was manifested"; this word "manifested" being also a favourite word with the Evangelist, and applied by him to our Lord's appearance in the world (i. 31); and the Epistle closes with "this is the eternal Life" (v. 20); see also v. 11, 12. Other titles given to our Lord in both Gospel and Epistle are "Only begotten" (John i. 14; 1 John iv. 9), and "Saviour of the world" (John iv. 42; 1 John iv. 14).

The latter coincidence deserves the more attention because the title indicates a total change from the Messianic conception when Jews had looked for a successor to David who should restore the independence of their people and raise them to sovereignty. They now believe in one who was the "propitiation, not for their sins only, but for the sins of the whole world." It would be too long to go through several other coincidences between the two books in connection with this word "world." One may be

mentioned, the phrase to "overcome the world" (John xvi. 33; 1 John v. 4, 5).

It would be tedious to go through all the details of proof, and we but add by way of specimen a few more coincidences, in some of which identical expressions are to be found, John xvi. 20, 1 John i. 4; John xvii. 3, 1 John v. 24; John v. 38, 1 John ii. 14; John viii. 47, 1 John iv. 6; John i. 18, 1 John iv. 12; John xiv. 16, 1 John ii. 1; John xix. 34, 1 John v. 6. Suffice it to say that the proofs of common authorship are so abundant that a good critic could hardly fail to recognise the books as works of the same author, even if they had come to him separately, and if he were ignorant of the fact that, from the earliest times the books were known down to the present century, the belief in their common authorship had universally prevailed.

3. *The Two Minor Epistles.*—It has been already stated that while the early Church was unanimous in ascribing the Gospel and the First Epistle to the same author, the other two Epistles had in early times so much more limited circulation that there was then some difference of opinion as to whether "the Elder" in whose name they are written was or was not the Apostle. But if the weakness of external testimony should cause us any hesitation in accepting the belief in unity of authorship, which after a time came to prevail universally in the Church, our doubts are entirely removed by internal evidence. Not only does the Second Epistle bear a general resemblance to the First, both as to ideas and as to form of expression, but it has been pointed out that of the thirteen verses of which the shorter Epistle consists eight have close counterparts in the First.

One phrase which has been already noticed as common to the Gospel and the First Epistle, "that your joy may be full," occurs in the Second Epistle also (verse 12). Other indications of common authorship will be found on comparing the phrase "both the Father and the Son" (verse 9) with 1 John ii. 23, v. 12; and what is said about the commandment of love 2 John 5—7 with 1 John iii. 22, 23. In these verses of 2 John there is an even more striking coincidence with 1 John ii. 7, in the successive mention of "that which ye had from the beginning," "that which ye heard from the beginning." The Third Epistle so resembles the Second, both in its commencement and its conclusion, that no one has dreamed of separating the authorship of these two.

4. *The Book of the Revelation.*—It is not intended in this article to discuss the authorship of the Book of Revelation. The plan we have adopted of addressing ourselves mainly to the English reader precludes us from entering into an examination of the

character of the Greek of this book, on the unlikeness of which to the Greek of the Gospel has been founded one of the principal arguments for the diversity of authorship of the two books. But if we take into account how very different are the subjects of the two books, the English reader will be much more struck with their likeness than with their unlikeness. In the present case the study of the books in a translation is not without advantage; for one of the methods by which those who hold both books to have proceeded from the same author account for the difference of Greek style, is by the hypothesis that this author who, it will be readily admitted, thought in Aramaic, employed in the two books different hands to translate his thoughts into Greek. If this were so, differences of style introduced by the translators would be apt to disappear when the books were translated into another language. Thus by examining the books in a translation we are able to separate their fundamental points of likeness or unlikeness from those peculiarities of diction for which it is possible not the author but his secretary may be responsible.

Of the striking agreement between the doctrine concerning our Lord taught in the Gospel and in the Apocalypse we shall speak a little later on; at present we deal with more superficial points of resemblance. The Evangelist lays particular emphasis on the piercing of our Lord's side at His crucifixion and the issuing therefrom of blood and water as an incident that he had witnessed himself (xix. 35). We have already seen that the Epistle also makes mention of the water and the blood (v. 6). Now in the very beginning of the Apocalypse we find a reference to the piercing of our Lord with a clear use of the same words of the prophet Zechariah that are expressly quoted in the Gospel; and it may be added that the two books agree in using the same translation of that prophet's words, not that of the Septuagint.

Let us return now to the opening words of the Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word." This title, "the Word," it will be observed, is used by the Evangelist only in his prologue; not only is it never put into our Lord's own mouth, but the disciples are never introduced as using it when speaking of Him. We have not laid stress on the fact that the Epistle also begins by speaking of "the word of life," because it admits of question whether this phrase is here to be understood as the name of a person; but there certainly is a coincidence with the prologue of the Gospel in the next verse of the Epistle, for the "eternal life who was *with the Father*," is clearly identical with "the Word who was *with God*." In the Revelation (xix. 11) our Lord is given the appellation "Faithful and true," and (v. 13) His name is said to be the Word of God. The former appellation sends

us back to Rev. iii. 14, where Jesus is spoken of as the "*faithful and true* witness, the *beginning* of the creation of God." He is also called "the *beginning* and the end" (Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 13).

In connection with the word "witness" just quoted it must be mentioned that this is one of the favourite words of the Evangelist, occurring with him far more frequently than with any other New Testament writer; and that the same characteristic prevails in the Apocalypse. Another title commonly given to our Lord in the Book of Revelation is the "Lamb"; but this is also found in the Gospel, "Behold the Lamb of God" (i. 36). The cleansing power of the blood of Jesus finds startling expression in the Book of Revelation where the redeemed are described as having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (vii. 14); but the doctrine is also to be found in the Epistle, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (i. 7). The title "Son of God" which is so often given to our Lord in the Gospel, is ascribed to Him also in the Apocalypse (iv. 18).

There are many other coincidences of language; for instance, the phrase "he that overcometh," which is of frequent occurrence alike in Apocalypse, Gospel, and Epistles (John xvi. 33; 1 John ii. 13, iv. 4, v. 4; Rev. ii. 7, 11, iii. 5, xii. 11, xxi. 7). The phrase "keep my word" Rev. iii. 8, 10; "keep my sayings" (Rev. xxii. 7, 9) is a favourite with the Evangelist, but is not used by any other New Testament writer (John viii. 51, 52, 55; xiv. 23, 24; xv. 20; xvii. 6; 1 John ii. 5). The same imagery is employed in both books as to the thirst and hunger of the soul, and as to the means of supplying these needs. In the Revelation (ii. 17) Jesus promises believers "the hidden manna"; in the Gospel referring also to the manna, "the true bread from heaven"; and it may be added that this word "true," in the sense of "real," "genuine," is another of the characteristic words of the Gospel also frequently occurring in the Apocalypse. So likewise our Lord's cry in the Gospel (vii. 37), "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink," is repeated in the Apocalypse (xxii. 17), "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

But the close affinity of the two books comes out more plainly when we study the doctrinal characteristics of both.

5. *The Christology of Gospel and Apocalypse.*—We have already spoken of the difference of which every reader is conscious when he passes to the Fourth Gospel from the study of the preceding three. One point of difference is the predominance in the Fourth Gospel of the doctrinal over the narrative element. The three

synoptic Evangelists do not give us the impression of having any object in view, but simply to relate those deeds and words of our Lord which had most fastened themselves on His disciples' recollection. The Fourth Gospel is avowedly written with a purpose, namely, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name" (xx. 31). Accordingly, before telling anything of the earthly life of Jesus, the Evangelist begins by declaring the doctrine of His pre-existence. He was with God "in the beginning" before yet anything was created, for "through him all things were made." Clement of Alexandria, before the end of the second century, had expressed this difference in the statement that John, "feeling that the things pertaining to the body had been sufficiently declared in the previous Gospels, at the request of his friends and under the inspiration of the Spirit wrote a spiritual Gospel."

Assertions of our Lord's pre-existence run through the Gospel and are put into His own mouth. He repeatedly declares that He had been in heaven before His appearance on earth (iii. 13; vi. 33, 38, 51, 62; xvi. 28). He claims to have had glory with the Father before the world was (xvii. 5). He claims to be the only way through which men can have access to God (x. 9; xiv. 6). If the treachery of Judas seems to cast discredit on his Master's judgment of character, the Evangelist is careful to tell that He had never been deceived; for that "knowing what was in man," He had all along foreseen the traitor's faithlessness (ii. 24; vi. 67, 71; xiii. 4). If it seems incredible that men should be able to put to death one of supernatural power, the Evangelist records his Master's declaration that His death had been entirely voluntary: "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself" (x. 18). It is taught with equal distinctness that it was as a sacrifice for others His life was given (x. 11, 15; xv. 13; xi. 51, 52; 1 John iii. 16, ii. 2). Further "the Son" is represented as not only having been in the past the agent in the work of creation, but also as appointed to be in the future the administrator of judgment. All judgment has been committed unto the Son. It is at His voice the dead shall one day come forth, and by His authority that judgment shall be executed on them (v. 22—29). It follows that completely divine honour is claimed for Him; He and the Father are one (x. 30); all men are to honour the Son even as they honour the Father (v. 23).

It has seemed to some critics impossible that such a belief concerning Jesus of Nazareth should be entertained by one who, like the Apostle John, had been his companion during great

part of His earthly life. But this at least is certain, that the writer of the Apocalypse also held the doctrines just described. For the assimilation of the honours paid to God and to the Lamb see Rev. vii. 10, xx. 6, xxi. 22, 23, xxii. 1; for the execution of judgment by the Son see Rev. xix. 11, *sq.*; for the atonement made by His death Rev. v. 9; for his eternal existence xxii. 13.

But in truth the doctrines just stated were the beliefs of the Christian Church before either Gospel or Apocalypse was written. Paul associated with those who had been apostles before him, and must have known what they thought of their Master, but his teaching exhibits striking coincidence with that of the Gospel and Apocalypse which we are discussing. Thus with regard to the ascription to Jesus of divine honours, and even the use concerning Him of the name of God, see Rom. ix. 5; Phil. ii. 6; 2 Cor. viii. 14; Eph. v. 5; 1 Thess. iii. 11; on His pre-existence and His share in the work of Creation, 1 Cor. viii. 6 and Col. i. 16, 17; on His future judgment, 2 Cor. v. 10; on the voluntariness of His humiliation, 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 7; on the atoning efficacy of His blood, Rom. v. 9; 1 Cor. v. 7; Gal. iii. 13; Eph. i. 7. No book of the New Testament leads us to form any different opinion about our Lord.

With respect to the testimony to the dignity of our Lord's person borne in the Synoptic Gospels, not to quote such passages as Matt. v. 27, 28, 29, xxviii. 18—20, we content ourselves with the proof that these Gospels agree with St. Paul and with the Johannine books in teaching that it is Jesus Christ who shall preside at the Judgment of the Last Day. They represent Him as, in answer to a solemn adjuration by the high priest, professing Himself to be that Son of Man who was one day to come in the clouds of heaven as Daniel had prophesied. (Matt. xxvii. 65; Mark xiv. 62; Luke xxii. 66. See also Matt. xxiv. 30 xxv. 31, *sq.*) If Jesus had but represented Himself as exempt from the judgment to which all others must submit on the last day, that would have been to put in a very startling way a claim to absolute and unquestioned innocency of life; but when He goes further, and claims to be judge of the whole human race, the pretension would be ridiculous except on the supposition that Jesus was in nature quite different from other men.

It is to be owned that assertions of this uniqueness of our Lord's nature occur less frequently in the Synoptic Gospels than in the Fourth; but if the ancient opinion be correct that the Fourth Gospel was written by one acquainted with the others, and with the intention of supplementing their contents, then the mere fact that any point had been slightly touched on in the earlier Gospels would be reason enough for its being more fully

dwelt on in the latest Gospel. It will be well, therefore, to examine how far internal evidence supports the correctness of this ancient opinion; for it must be owned that this is a point on which modern critics are far from being agreed, many of those who believe the Fourth Gospel to have been written by the Apostle John not admitting that he could have been acquainted with any of the other Gospels.

6. *The Supplemental Character of the Fourth Gospel.* — Whether it be intended or not, the fact is certain that the Fourth Gospel is supplemental to the other three. These three resemble each other in general character, and have in common a number of incidents and discourses, even related in nearly the same words, so as to suggest that each Evangelist intended his work for readers not supposed to be likely to have met with the others. But it is quite exceptional if we find in the Fourth Gospel anything that had been recorded in the others; and when we do, there is usually some obvious reason for its insertion. Thus, though the miracle of feeding the five thousand related in John vi. had been told in the other Gospels, it is used by St. John to introduce a discourse which the previous Evangelists had not recorded. Except in this chapter St. John relates no miracle recorded in the other Gospels, while he gives six which they had not mentioned, the turning water into wine (ii.), the healing of the nobleman's son (iv.), the cure of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (v.), the giving sight to the man born blind (ix.), the raising of Lazarus (xi.), and the miraculous draught of fishes (xxi.)

Now the question is, can this avoiding of topics sufficiently dealt with in the other Gospels be reasonably ascribed to accident? If different persons had attempted independently to commit to writing the leading facts believed in in the Christian community concerning the life of its Founder, together with some specimens of His discourses, although some things might be omitted by one that were told by another, there surely would be a number which any two would agree in regarding as too important to be omitted. It would be a feat little less difficult than that in the old ordeals of walking blindfold amid hot ploughshares without touching any, if a narrator without knowledge of what three predecessors had told, managed to keep clear of everything they had related.

But we are under no temptation to avoid the most natural explanation of the characteristics of the Fourth Gospel now under consideration. For all critics agree in ascribing to this Gospel a date considerably later than that of any of the other three. Those who believe the Apostle John to have written it believe that he

did so at the very end of a long life—that is to say, not long before the end of the first century. Those who do not ascribe the Gospel to St. John place its date still later. In any case all believe that the other Gospels were in circulation at the time the Fourth Gospel was written, and if so, why should we imagine that its writer had not seen them?

One thing is certain, that this Evangelist takes for granted that his readers had already, through some source or other, become acquainted with the principal facts of the Gospel history. In the first chapter (ver. 40) he describes Andrew as Simon Peter's brother, taking for granted that Simon Peter was known. A reference to the Baptist (iii. 24) is accompanied by the parenthetical remark, "for John was not yet cast into prison," evidently intended for men who knew that John's career had been thus cut short, but who needed the explanation that the events which the Evangelist is relating occurred while the Baptist was still in activity. He does not directly tell of the appointment of the twelve apostles, but he assumes it as known (vi. 70): "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" His narrative does not inform us that Joseph was the reputed father of our Lord, but this appears incidentally when the Jews ask, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" (vi. 42; i. 45). The baptism of our Lord is not expressly mentioned, but is implied in the account the Baptist gives of his having seen the Spirit descending on Him (i. 32). The ascension is not related, but it is thrice referred to (iii. 13; vi. 62; xx. 17).

An argument may also be drawn from the omissions of the Gospel. It has been noticed that it does not relate the institution of either of the sacraments of Baptism or the Lord's Supper. But it is certain from other sources that both these institutions were established Christian rites at the comparatively late period when the Fourth Gospel was written. It would be strange if the Evangelist's silence about these rites were intended to disparage them, seeing that in point of fact no book has done more than this Gospel to raise the estimation in which these rites have been held in the Christian Church, a discourse in the third chapter having been commonly understood of the one, and one in the sixth of the other. It is therefore reasonable to believe that the reason why the Evangelist does not record our Lord's institution of these rites is because he knew that his readers had already other accounts in their hands.

If there can be any doubt on this point there seems room for none on the next point, viz., the silence of the Evangelist as to our Lord's birth at Bethlehem, and of the tribe of Judah. For

he does relate (i. 45; vii. 41, 52) that it was made a ground of objection to the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah that he was a Galilean, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother they knew (vi. 42), whereas it had been foretold that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem, and of the house of David. The Evangelist, as we shall presently see, believed in the Old Testament, and habitually takes pleasure in tracing the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies in the life of our Lord. We may be sure therefore that he himself believed that Jesus, whom he accepted as the Messiah, had been born as the prophets foretold He should. And he certainly would not have placed a stumbling block in his readers' way by telling them of the Jewish objection without ever telling them the true answer to it, unless he knew that they were already in possession of that answer in some more authentic shape than mere traditional rumour.

The examination made in the present section was necessary, because there can be no sound criticism of the Fourth Gospel without a correct decision of the question whether or not the author intended it as a complete account of the Saviour's life. It is an undoubted fact that the Fourth Gospel omits many things told in the previous Gospels, and relates much which they omit. It is necessary to decide whether on this account we are to regard this witness as at variance with his predecessors, or whether we are at liberty to combine what he and they have told, making the assumption that the later writer was designedly concise where his predecessors had been full, and full where they had been concise.

7. *The Evangelist was a Jew.*—The earliest dissension that we read of in the Christian community arose out of the opposition made by men of Jewish birth to the doctrine preached by Paul, namely, that the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been thrown down and that Jew and Gentile were thenceforward one in Christ Jesus. On this question the Fourth Evangelist takes his side with those who were in favour of the widest opening of the portals of the Christian Church. When a question was raised as to the rival claims of Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim our Lord is recorded as answering (iv. 21), "that the hour cometh, when ye shall neither at Jerusalem nor in this mountain worship the Father." Our Lord is represented as announcing (x. 16) that He had other sheep "not of this fold," whom also He must bring so that all should become one flock. Jesus is recorded as predicting (xii. 32) that He should draw all men unto him. His death is stated (xi. 52) to be not for the Jewish nation only, but "that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." The

Apocalypse likewise represents the redeemed (vii. 9), as a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues (see also v. 9).

Yet he who thus declares himself on the side of those who freely admitted Gentiles into the Church was, like St. Paul, of Jewish birth himself. We may gather this from his possessing a familiarity with the Old Testament, not easily gained by one who had not known the book from childhood. The testimony borne to Jesus by the Jewish scriptures is both appealed to in general terms (v. 39, 46; i. 45), and particular instances are specified of the fulfilment in Him of predictions of the prophets (xii. 15, 38—41; xix. 24, 36, 37; xx. 9). In one of these cases (xii. 15), where two previous Evangelists have simply recorded a fact without connecting it with the Old Testament, St. John quotes the prophecy which was thereby fulfilled, and remarks that the disciples had not at first understood that in what they were doing they were fulfilling a prophecy. Old Testament types of the Saviour's work are cited (iii. 14; vi. 32; xix. 36).

This Evangelist also lays on the Jewish feasts a stress not put on them in the other Gospels, telling of our Lord's attendance on many concerning which they had been silent (ii. 18, 23; vi. 4; vii. 37; x. 22). He exhibits acquaintance with Jewish customs and habits of thought (ii. 5; iv. 27; vii. 15, 35; viii. 48; ix. 2; xi. 55; xviii. 28; xix. 31). The Jews are claimed (i. 11) to be our Lord's "own" people; and in the very passage where the claims of spiritual religion, apart from any distinction of place or race, are most strongly set forth, the prerogatives of the Jew are asserted as strongly as they are by St. Paul himself when he has to answer the question, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" This Gospel puts into our Lord's mouth the words (iv. 22) "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for *salvation is of the Jews.*"

But though the Evangelist thus shows himself to be a Jew, he writes like one living among Gentiles, and at that late period, when the Christian community had become completely separated from the Jewish, so as to be known by different names. In a community where men of Jewish birth were in a decided minority, the title "the Jews" would come to be used to denote a distinction rather of religion than of birth. It is so used by St. Paul (1 Thess. ii. 14), who distinguishes "the Churches of God that are in Judea" from "the Jews," the latter being described as those "who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and have persecuted us." In this sense the phrase "the Jews" is used repeatedly in the Fourth Gospel, as it also is in the First (xxviii. 15).

The conclusion to which we have just come is in full accordance

with the well-authenticated tradition that the Fourth Gospel is the latest of the four and that it made its first appearance in Asia Minor. But this work, though written at a distance from Jerusalem, exhibits minute acquaintance with the topography of the Holy Land. He mentions the following localities (some of them being but small places), and in some cases exhibits minute knowledge of them: Cana of Galilee (ii. 1, 2; iv. 46; xxi. 2); Bethsaida (i. 44); Bethany beyond Jordan (i. 28); Bethany, near Jerusalem (ii. 18); the city Ephraim, near the wilderness (xi. 54); Ænon, near to Salim, where John baptized (iii. 23); Sychar, the city of Samaria where Jacob's Well was (iv. 4). At Jerusalem the Evangelist knows the pool of Bethesda, near the sheep-gate, with its five porches, the treasury at the Temple, Solomon's porch, the pool Siloam, the brook Kedron, the place that is called the pavement but in the Hebrew Gabbatha, the place of the skull called in Hebrew Golgotha.

8. *The Date of the Gospel.*—We have already said that it cannot be placed in the very earliest days of the Church, but neither can it be placed, as some have done, so late as to be quite outside the limits of the apostolic age. We can at least say that it must be antecedent to the Gnostic heresies which broke out quite early in the second century. The problem that most occupied the minds of the Gnostic speculators was how to account for the origin of evil; and the solution they generally agreed in offering was that evil was inherent in matter. It followed that the creation of matter could not have been the work of the good God, and since the God of the Jews claimed the work of creation as His own, that He must be a being different from, and, according to many systems, hostile to the supreme God. Thus the authority of the Old Testament was rejected. Further, those who held these views found it impossible to believe that the Saviour could have assumed a material body, and so they were led to maintain that in His earthly life He was only in appearance like other men. Again, they could not believe that the existence of matter would be prolonged beyond the present life, and so they rejected the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. And as they conceived that perfection was to be attained through release from the dominion of matter, they inculcated an ascetic mode of life, abstinence from animal food and from wine, as well as from marriage through which the material life is perpetuated.

Now it is not merely that the Fourth Gospel gives no countenance to any of these theories, but there is no trace that the Evangelist had ever heard of them. The authority of the Old Testament is assumed as a matter about which there can be no question. The Temple which the Jews had built for the worship of their God is claimed by Jesus as His Father's house (ii. 16).

The resurrection of the body is plainly taught (v. 28), for the future life is not represented as resulting from the continuance of the soul, though separated from the body; but "they that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth." No question as to the lawfulness of marriage is suggested as having been raised, but Jesus is represented as gracing a wedding feast with His presence. Jesus is represented as having a body subject to the accidents of weariness and thirst, and which even after His resurrection His disciples might handle (xx. 27; 1 John i. 1). The question concerning the lawfulness of animal food had been raised in St. Paul's time (Rom. xiv. 2), and had been treated by him as a harmless scrupulosity. The question of the lawfulness of marriage had been also discussed (1 Cor. vii. 1). And towards the end of his life the teachers of asceticism had become so troublesome as to need to be more severely dealt with (1 Tim. iv. 3). But these questions do not appear to have been under discussion in the circle for which the fourth Evangelist wrote. On the other hand, a docetic theory concerning our Lord's person, which some things in the Gospel might be used to countenance, had become formidable enough when the Epistle was written to need express condemnation, and the denial that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh was pronounced to emanate from the spirit of antichrist (1 John iv. 3; 2 John 7).

Another consideration which forbids our assigning a very late date to the Fourth Gospel is drawn from the fact that it is in some instances in real or apparent disagreement with the Synoptic Gospels. It is enough to mention one point, about which harmonists dispute to the present day, viz., that the Synoptic narrative gives the impression that our Lord ate the Passover with His disciples on the night before He suffered, whereas St. John would lead us to think that He did not. Now if the Fourth Gospel had been composed at any time in the second century, a time when the other Gospels had had time to gain acceptance and to be generally received among Christians as the authentic account of their Master's life, the framer of this supplemental Gospel would have been careful to dovetail his work properly into the accepted story. He would not injure his chance of gaining credit for his new Gospel by deviating from what the Church had accepted as the true apostolic tradition. So that if objectors have been successful in attempts to find contradictions between the Fourth Gospel and the preceding three, the result would be not to overthrow, but to confirm the tradition as to the apostolic origin of the last Gospel. No one would venture to dispense with careful conformity to the established account but one whose own authority stood so high

that he had no need to consider what others had said before him.

The traditional account of the authorship of the Gospel is further confirmed by the perfect knowledge which the writer exhibits, how unlike the Messianic conception of a "Kingdom not of this world," which early came to be that of the Christian Church, was that expectation which prevailed among the Jews at the time of our Lord's coming, of a temporal deliverer who should restore sovereignty to their nation. This Evangelist tells that the impression produced by the miracle of feeding the multitude was such that they were about to come by force to make our Lord a king, and that He was obliged to withdraw Himself from their importunity to a mountain alone. He represents the prudent Jewish rulers as resolved to put down the prophesying of Jesus, because they feared that the political consequences of His assertion of His kingdom would be an unsuccessful revolt which would be disastrous to their nation (xi. 48). And he brings out the fact that it was as a pretender to temporal sovereignty that the Jews accused Him before Pilate, who, though personally inclined to dismiss the complaint, was withheld from doing so through fear of exciting the jealousy of his emperor by his remissness if in such a matter as this he showed himself not Caesar's friend (xix. 12).

This state of Jewish feeling could scarcely have been so vividly represented except by one who had himself experience of it. But it was quelled by the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, so that we are led to think of the Fourth Evangelist as one who had lived through the time before that event. There was indeed a revival of Jewish national feeling leading to the unsuccessful rebellion under Barcochba, which was put down A.D. 135. But considerations already brought forward, besides those to be presently adduced, forbid us to place the Fourth Gospel so late.

9. *The Johannine Authorship.*—It is a fact with which we have got to deal that the Evangelist four times expressly claims to have been an eye-witness of our Saviour's life (i. 14; xix. 35; xxi. 24; 1 John i. 1). In one of these passages (xxi. 24) the author is identified with him whom it describes as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and even if there had not been this explicit declaration, the way in which that disciple is introduced, xiii. 23; xix. 26; xx. 2; xxi. 7, 20, and probably xviii. 15, irresistibly conveys the impression that the Evangelist wished the readers to understand that he himself was that disciple. It does not admit of serious question that by this disciple the Apostle John is intended. Now it is a curious feature of this Gospel, which records things said by Apostles of whom the other three Gospels tell us little (Philip, vi. 7; xiv. 8; Andrew, vi. 9; Thomas,

xi. 16 ; xiv. 5 ; xx. 25 ; Judas, not Iscariot, xiv. 22), that it not only never mentions by name the great Apostle John, but that when speaking of our Lord's forerunner, it does not, like the other Gospels, add the title "the Baptist," but describes him simply as "John," as if there were no other of the same name with whom there might be danger of confounding him. Now, whereas almost everyone in the Church would feel the necessity of distinguishing by some special name John the forerunner from John the Apostle, there was just one person who would not feel that necessity and could not form the habit, namely, the Apostle John himself.

The character of the book is exactly what it might have been expected to be if the author's claim were well founded to have been an eye-witness on intimate terms with the subject of the narrative. The book is full of minute particulars of time and place (iv. 6, 52 ; viii. 20 ; x. 23 ; i. 44 ; xii. 21 ; xviii. 10). The Evangelist tells what places the disciples were accustomed to resort to (xi. 54 ; xviii. 2 ; xx. 19), what they said to each other (iv. 33 ; xi. 16 ; xvi. 17 ; xx. 25 ; xxi. 3, 7), and what they thought (ii. 11, 17, 23 ; iv. 27 ; xiii. 22, 29).

The question has to be decided whether all the details in which the Fourth Gospel is so abundant are to be regarded as the real recollections of an eye-witness or as the fictions of an unscrupulous inventor. In support of the latter view stress has been laid on alleged contradictions between the statements of the Fourth Gospel and what has been asserted in the simpler and more credible story of the earlier Evangelists. But on examination the supposed contradictions are found to melt away, and are completely accounted for when it is recognised that it was St. John's purpose to supplement some omissions in the only narratives till then current in the Church.

One of the most striking points of difference is that the Synoptic narrative gives an account of but one year of our Lord's ministry, the scene of which, until the last week, is laid in Galilee, whereas St. John relates the events of more Passovers than one, and tells of more visits than one by our Lord to Jerusalem. But a study of the internal characteristics of the Gospels has led many modern critics to accept one of the oldest traditions concerning the Gospels, namely, that the basis of St. Mark's Gospel, and to some extent of St. Matthew's and St. Luke's also, is the account which St. Peter gave of what he recollected of his Master's life. Now it was the most natural thing in the world, that that account should begin by relating how he himself had been called on to forsake all and follow Jesus, becoming thenceforward His constant companion. The events of that memorable day fill the first chapter of St. Mark's Gospel. But

that day was after John the Baptist was cast into prison (Mark i. 14), and St. John undertakes (iii. 24) to tell much that took place before John was cast into prison.

Now, although if we had St. Mark's Gospel only we might take up the idea that Simon and Andrew, James and John, had not known Jesus until they received His command to leave their fishing and become fishers of men, yet no such statement is made by the Evangelist, and St. John, so far from contradicting, throws great light on the preceding narrative when he explains that it was not at the bidding of an unknown person that the disciples forsook all. We learn from the Gospel that before the disciples thus forsook their avocations to follow Jesus, they had already learned under the guidance of John the Baptist to recognise Jesus as the prophet who should come into the world. The three Synoptic Gospels had each related the descent of the Holy Ghost on our Lord at His baptism without stating on what testimony their narrative was founded. St. John informs us, what when we think on it seems most natural, that the Church learned this fact on the testimony of the Baptist himself, who though, as St. Matthew tells us, he had already known enough of Jesus to feel that He had no need of baptism of his, yet was then first assured that it was He who was to come baptizing with the Holy Ghost. Great stress is laid on this testimony of the Baptist, which is appealed to as part of His credentials by our Lord Himself (John v. 32). But the fact that John had been witness to Jesus is indirectly attested by the Synoptic Gospels, which give us to understand that there was such a connection between John and his Successor that any who acknowledged the Divine mission of the Baptist would be bound in consistency to own the authority of Jesus (Matthew xxi. 25; Mark xi. 31; Luke xx. 5).

If St. Mark's narrative might have led us to think of the calling of the Apostles to forsake their ordinary avocations as immediately following the Baptism, St. Luke's narrative would lead us to think that there was some intervening time, so that there is nothing to stumble at if St. John's narrative makes us understand that the interval was still longer than we might otherwise have supposed.

Neither is there anything to stumble at if we are told that during that interval our Lord attended feasts at Jerusalem. Nay, rather we should have cause for surprise if the fact were not so; if He whom St. Matthew records as having said that it became Him "to fulfil all righteousness," whom St. Luke relates to have been brought up by His parents to attend a feast while still a boy, neglected to fulfil this duty of ordinary Jewish obligation. Nor would it be strange if some of His Apostles, before

they had yet been called to be His daily companions, were at least His fellow-travellers in journeys which as devout Jews they would doubtless have made on their own account. It has been suggested that besides the religious motive for visiting Jerusalem, St. John as a fisherman would have commercial reasons for visits, and might in this way have become known at the high priest's palace (John xviii. 16). In any case our Lord's words, Matt. xxiii. 37, "How often would I have gathered thy children together," imply repeated visits to Jerusalem; and indeed it is not credible that if He had come to Jerusalem for the first time for that Passover in which He suffered, and had not given offence by rebukes on previous visits, the authorities of Jerusalem would have so speedily resolved on His destruction, or been able in so short a time to find means to bring it about.

Thus, although critics of the last generation had objected to the trustworthiness of St. John's narrative, because in the part just discussed, and in some others, it appeared to them inconsistent with the preceding Gospels, yet the result of a closer examination has been to bring Renan, and others by no means prepossessed in favour of traditional views, to the conviction that the Fourth Gospel cannot be neglected by any one who attempts to write the history of the life of Jesus, and that it deserves to be trusted even on some points on which it gives an impression different from that produced by the narrative of the earlier Evangelists. It is not possible that the Fourth Gospel could thus throw real light upon the earlier narrative unless the writer was possessed of first-hand information. We have then only to choose between the account which the Church has always received, viz., that this Gospel was written by an eye-witness, namely, the Apostle St. John; and the hypothesis of some modern critics that the author was an unknown disciple of St. John who embodied in this Gospel possibly some things he had heard from his master, together with inventions of his own.

In favour of the former view may be urged that no critic can mistake the traces of strong personal feeling under which the Evangelist writes, though he refrains from giving formal expression to it, the feeling of strong attachment to his Master, of indignation at the treachery of Judas, and at the preference given by the Jews to Barabbas. Attention must also be paid to the manner in which the Evangelist deals in his last chapters with the belief current among the disciples that Jesus had predicted that St. John should not die before His second coming. The Evangelist explains that the belief had originated in words of our Lord which did not necessarily guarantee any such promise, yet he refrains from saying that the belief was wrong.

This quite falls in with the account that the Gospel was written when St. John had attained a great age, but before he died.

Against the hypothesis that the Gospel was written by an unknown person is the evidence yielded by the third Epistle ascribed to St. John, which we have already found good reason to think was written by the author of the Gospels. This Epistle carries the evidence of its genuineness on its face by revealing a state of things which no forger had any motive for inventing, or was ever likely to imagine as possible. The writer, it appears, had sent brethren as bearers of a letter from him to a particular Church, and they, instead of being received with the hospitality usual among Christians, were treated as heretics, the man who claimed to take the leading part in the government of that Church actually threatening excommunication to any who should afford them hospitality. What uninspired writers tell with one consent about St. John is that he spent the last years of his life settled in Asia Minor, and ruling the Churches of that district. It is a conceivable thing that before his arrival he may have sent messengers with a letter, possibly from his place of banishment in Patmos; and as we know from the Epistles to the Corinthians and the Galatians that the Apostolic Church was not free from dissensions, there is nothing incredible in the supposition that the established rulers of the Asiatic Churches may at first have given an unfriendly reception to a new teacher.

But no one in the next century would be likely to imagine apostolic messengers meeting such a reception; and certainly it would be absolutely contrary to the interests of a forger to represent the hero of his fiction treated with disrespect. Assured as we are then that the Third Epistle is no fiction, but the real letter of a great Church ruler preserved after the circumstances which had drawn it forth had been forgotten, it follows at once that the author is no unknown person hiding his personality under the cover of a great name. He comes forward in his own person, claiming great authority, sending his legates to an old-established Church, and treating resistance to his claims on the part of the rulers of such Churches as idle "prating," which he is confident that by his presence he will at once put down. And according to all appearance his anticipations prove correct, and his rule over the Churches of Asia is completely acquiesced in. When such a man publishes a Gospel containing a clearly implied claim on the part of the writer to be the "disciple whom Jesus loved," we cannot suppose the claim to be made on behalf of some one else, but must regard it as exhibiting the grounds of the authority which the writer himself exercised. Those who deny him to have been the Apostle John are bound to tell who else he could possibly have been.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

1. *The Authorship of the Acts.*—It may be regarded as absolutely certain, even on the admission of the most sceptical critics, that the Acts of the Apostles was written by the same author as the Third Gospel, and that the writer of both was St. Luke. The book comes before us as the professed sequel to that Gospel, which is assigned to St. Luke by the Muratorian Fragment on the Canon (not later than A.D. 170), as well as by Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and others. The reception of the Acts of the Apostles by the earliest Christian writers, if not absolutely proved, is yet rendered extremely probable by the resemblance to phrases which it contains, and facts which it narrates, in the writings of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Hermas, Polycarp, Dionysius of Corinth, Papias, Justin Martyr, and the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, all of whom wrote before the close of the second century.

It is true that not one of these references would be *singly* sufficient to demonstrate an acquaintance with the Acts, but their collective force is too strong to be rejected; especially as it is further strengthened by traces that the book was known to the Ebionites, to some of the early Gnostics, and to the Pagan scoffer Lucian, as well as to the Churches of Lyons and Vienne. The probability of the early dissemination of the Acts, established by these apparent allusions, is confirmed by the distinct evidence of the Muratorian Fragment. In a passage, of which the general meaning is clear, this ancient document directly attributes to St. Luke the authorship both of the Gospel and of the Acts. This "Canon" represents the testimony of the *Western Church*; and as the book was certainly known to Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who as a pupil of Polycarp represents the traditions of the *Eastern Church*, no doubt can be entertained as to the authenticity of the Acts.

The learned Eusebius of Cæsarea, to whom Church history owes so much, refers to the Acts as the work of St. Luke,

and as a book indisputably genuine (ὁμολογούμενον*). Of this fact no doubt was ever expressed till towards the close of the ninth century, when Photius makes the astonishing statement that, while some considered the book to have been written by Luke, others attributed it to Barnabas, or Clement of Rome. To conjectures so ignorant and baseless Photius himself attributes no importance, and he says that the question of the Evangelist's authorship is evident on the surface.

The only statement in any of the Fathers which can be regarded as derogatory to the authority of the Acts is the incidental remark of St. Chrysostom, at the beginning of his Homilies (A.D. 401), that many persons knew nothing of the existence of the book. Probably the remark only applies to persons at Constantinople, who may have been but recently converted, and who were probably very ignorant of all the sacred books except the Gospels. It must be remembered that manuscripts were rare and precious, and as the Acts was addressed to one individual it was less likely than other books to get into universal circulation. The suggestions that it was written by any other author than St. Luke have been so contrary to all available evidence, and have found so few followers, that it is quite unnecessary to enter into any serious refutation of them.

For indeed the internal evidence that the book was written by the Third Evangelist is even stronger than the external.

(i.) Both the Gospel and the Acts are prefaced by a carefully composed introduction in which the works are dedicated to a certain Theophilus, to whom in the Gospel is given the honourable title of "most excellent."

(ii.) In both treatises there is a remarkable identity of style. Nearly a hundred phrases and idioms are common to the Gospel and Acts. Some words seem to belong characteristically to St. Luke and St. Paul almost alone among the sacred writers. Thus the beautiful word χάρις, "grace" or "favour," does not occur in the first two Evangelists, and only in one brief clause of St. John (i. 14—17); but it occurs eight times in St. Luke's Gospel, seventeen times in the Acts, and very frequently in the Epistles of St. Paul.† The verb χαρίζομαι occurs only in the Epistles of St. Paul and seven times in the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts.

(iii.) Further than this, it is a curious fact that St. Luke, both in the Gospel and the Acts, has *two* styles. His own proper style

* It also occurs ten times in 1 Peter—an Epistle which in many respects shows a Pauline tone.

† Euseb., *H. E.* iii. 25.

is more correct and classical than that of any other writer in the New Testament; but there are entire chapters, alike in the Gospel and the Acts, in which we find a totally different style, largely coloured by Hebraisms, which shows at once that the writer, by a method peculiarly his own, is incorporating written documents or has verbally taken down the testimony of eye-witnesses.

(iv.) Besides this curious unity of style and literary characteristics, there is a close resemblance in *tone* between the Gospel and the Acts. Both are marked by a fine geniality, a delicate insight, a singular sweetness, which becomes still more full of charm from its alliance with a fervid enthusiasm. The writer is a consummate artist who produces the greatest effect by the fewest touches. Partly because he is dealing with facts known to him either directly or mediately at first hand, and partly because he was endowed with a high but unconscious literary skill, he gives us the most vivid delineation of characters and events. Without any long descriptions or psychological analysis, Philip, Barnabas, Stephen, James, Herod Agrippa I., Felix, Festus, Herod Agrippa II., Gallio, and many other personages, both heathen and Christian, are made to stand out in distinct personality from the few brief pages which furnish us with so vast a range of priceless information.

(v.) There is further a unity of *thought* in the Gospel and the Acts. They reveal to us that the author was a man of large sympathies, who, in his general theology no less than in separate expressions, was attached to that view of the Gospel doctrine—that “Gospel to the Gentiles”—of which St. Paul was “the vessel of election.”

We may then regard it as unquestionable that St. Luke was the author of the Acts. With supreme modesty he entirely suppresses his own name, and he is only mentioned three times in Scripture, as “the beloved physician” (Col. iv. 14), the “fellow-labourer” and most faithful companion of St. Paul in his first and second Roman imprisonments (Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11). From the context of the first passage it has been inferred that he was not “of the circumcision,” and there can therefore be but little doubt that he was “a proselyte of the gate.” That he was a Syrian of Antioch is probable from internal evidence, as well as from the statements of Eusebius and Jerome; and if the reading “while *we* [ἡμῶν] were assembled together” in Acts xi. 28 be genuine,* he first made the acquaintance of St. Paul at Antioch.

* It is found in D (the Codex Bezae), and was known to Augustine.

All that we further know about him is deduced from those sections of the Acts in which he uses the word "we" throughout. These "we" sections, as they are called, show us that he joined the little missionary band of the Apostle at Troas (Acts xvi. 10), and, becoming one of the earliest Evangelists of Europe, accompanied him to Macedonia, probably in his character as "a physician," since at that time St. Paul had been suffering from an acute attack of his "thorn in the flesh." He seems to have stayed behind at Philippi (xviii. 1 "they"), where we still find him after a lapse of seven years (xx. 5). He was appointed one of the delegates to collect and convey to Jerusalem the contributions of the Gentile Christians (2 Cor. viii. 18), and he went with St. Paul to the Holy City (xxi. 18). It is probable that he stayed with St. Paul during his two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea, and that during that time his Gospel was partly written. He accompanied the Apostle on his disastrous voyage to Rome, and lived with him, in all probability, until his liberation.

Theophilus, to whom he dedicates his work, may have been the wealthy Antiochene Christian mentioned in the Clementines as having lent his house to St. Peter for Christian assemblies; and if so St. Luke may have been his physician-slave or freedman. Contractions, like Lucas for Lucanus, are common in the names of slaves. There is not the slightest evidence that he was a painter, and our earliest authority for his supposed martyrdom is a vague reference of St. Gregory of Nazianzus towards the close of the fourth century. That he was familiar with the sea is clear from the *accurate* though *unprofessional* allusions made in his minute descriptions of St. Paul's voyages, and it is not an unreasonable conjecture that he may have sometimes practised his healing art in the huge and densely-crowded merchant ships which whitened the Mediterranean with their sails during the summer months. His knowledge of medicine is abundantly illustrated by the medical language which is found in both of his writings, and which has even left some marked traces on the phraseology of St. Paul.

2. *The Main Subject of the Book.*—The contents are indicated by the title, "The Acts of the Apostles;" but whether this title came from the author himself or not is very uncertain. The manuscripts vary between "Acts;" "Acts of Apostles;" "Acts of the Apostles;" and "The Acts of the Apostles." "Acts" is the title given in the Sinaitic Manuscript, and is a name frequently used also in apocryphal literature, to describe what we would call "Memoirs." The book was quoted by the learned Clement of Alexandria as "Acts of the Apostles."

Strictly speaking the fuller title—The Acts of the Apostles—is not accurate. It errs by excess; for the eleven, as a body, play but a very subordinate part in the book, and of individual Apostles we hear very little except of St. Peter and St. Paul. The mention of St. John is quite incidental, and he only appears in a secondary capacity on three occasions (iii. 1; iv. ; xii. 2). The martyrdom of St. James the Elder is mentioned (xii. 2), but nothing further is told us about any of the rest of the eleven except St. Peter. On the other hand we have certain “acts” of the two deacons Philip and Stephen, and of James, the Lord’s brother.

(i.) But even the recorded “Acts” of St. Peter and St. Paul are extremely incomplete. St. Luke tells us nothing about St. Peter after the Council of Jerusalem, and makes no mention of his memorable dispute with St. Paul at Antioch, his subsequent journeys, or his martyrdom at Rome. And minute as are many of the details furnished about St. Paul, the Evangelist narrates but a tithe of his manifold adventures. If that part of the Acts which narrates his mission-labours deserves the title of “the Christian Odyssey,” it is an Odyssey both fragmentary and discontinuous.

Absolutely invaluable as a source of information respecting large portions of the Apostle’s life, yet the Acts does not even mention so much as one of his five scourgings with Jewish thongs; one only of his three beatings with Roman rods; one only of the three shipwrecks which preceded the one so elaborately recorded. Two only are mentioned of his traditional seven imprisonments.* Nothing is said of the night and day in the deep. There are even whole classes of the Apostle’s hardships and perils which are passed over without notice; such as the perils of rivers, perils of robbers, perils in the wilderness, perils among false brethren, and the miseries of hunger, thirst, fasting, and nakedness.†

It is still more singular that although St. Luke, as a friend of St. Paul during his long Roman imprisonments, must have been familiar with his letters, and may even have acted at times as his amanuensis, yet he does not so much as allude to the fact that the Apostle ever wrote a single Epistle. Titus was a beloved, faithful, and able companion of St. Paul, yet his name is unmentioned; nor does the writer allude, except very incidentally, to his own labours in the cause of the Gospel. Obviously therefore the Acts does not pretend to be a complete history. Considered in that light it would be fragmentary and

* Clem. Rom. *Ep. ad Cor.* 5, ἐπτάκις δεσµὰ φορέσας.

† 2 Cor. xi. 23—27.

imperfect. It is only by combining the numerous data of St. Paul's Epistles with the events narrated in the Acts that we are enabled to grasp their full significance, or to gain an adequate conception of all that the Apostle of the Gentiles was or did.

(ii.) How we are to account for this phenomenon will be seen in the 5th and 6th sections of this chapter, when we deal with the object which the writer had in view, and the method which he adopted. Meanwhile we may pause to observe that the avowed fragmentariness of the narrative furnishes us with the most ample and unsuspected means for testing its accuracy. That it was written independently of St. Paul's Epistles is admitted, and it is certain that errors would have been detected in hundreds of incidental allusions if the narrative had not been entirely faithful. As it is, the separate details furnished by the Epistles furnish us with a multitude of undesigned coincidences, and may be tessellated with St. Luke's narrative into a perfect mosaic. Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ* has furnished a striking proof, and one that might be indefinitely elaborated, that the Acts can thus stand the severest test of comparison in the minutest details with a series of genuine and (so to speak) accidental compositions of the very Apostle with whom the narrative is mainly concerned.

(iii.) The book covers a period of about thirty years in the history of Christianity, from the Ascension, in A.D. 33 of the received chronology, to the close of St. Paul's first Roman imprisonment, about March, A.D. 63. We see at a glance that it falls into two great sections, of which the first (i.—xii.) is mainly occupied with the work of St. Peter; and the second (xiii.—xxviii.) is devoted almost exclusively to the missions, sufferings, and controversies of St. Paul. On another principle of division we might regard the first section as consisting of chapters i.—ix. 31, which narrate the establishment of the Church in Palestine; and the second from ix. 32 to the end of the book, as designed to tell the history of the extension of church membership to Gentiles, and the radiation of the Church over Asia Minor, Greece, and the Western world as far as Rome.

(iv.) The first fourteen verses are introductory. We may infer their preciousness from the fact that in these alone we learn that only forty days elapsed between the Resurrection and the Ascension. They mention the inauguration of the kingdom, and record Christ's "promise of the Father" and of "the baptism by the Holy Ghost." These were the true secret of that stupendous victory gained over the world "by the irresistible might of weakness" which sceptical historians have vainly endeavoured to explain. The eighth verse might well stand as

the motto for the whole book: "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." The first section of the book records the fulfilment of the earlier part of this promise, and carries us down to the conversion of St. Paul; the latter portion of the book illustrates the triumphant beginnings of its complete and final accomplishment.

(v.) The analysis of the book is, briefly, as follows:—

Introduction. i. 1—3.

I. *The Founding of the Church* (i. 4—ii. 47).

The Ascension and last instructions of Christ (i. 4—ii.); the election of Matthias (i. 12—26). The Day of Pentecost and the state of the primitive Church (ii. 1—47).

II. *The Church in Jerusalem* (iii.—vii.).

Miracles, testimony, and sufferings of St. Peter, together with the first persecutions (iii.—v. 42).

The election of deacons (v. 1—7).

The Acts of St. Stephen (vi. 8—vii. 60).

III. *The Church in Judæa and Samaria* (viii.—ix. 43).

The Acts of Philip; the visit of Peter and John to Samaria; the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (viii.).

The conversion of Saul (ix. 1—30).

The Acts of Peter at Lydda and Joppa (ix. 31—43).

IV. *The Transference of Church Membership to the Gentiles*.

The vision of Peter and the conversion of Cornelius (x.).

The objections of Jewish particularism broken down (xi. 1—18).

The capital of Christianity gradually transferred from Jerusalem to Antioch, by the combined work of Barnabas and Saul (xi. 19—30).

Persecution of Herod Agrippa I. Martyrdom of James. Death of Herod (xii.).

V. *The Church among the Gentiles, and their relation to the Jewish Christians*.

α First missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas through Cyprus, Pamphylia, and Pisidia (xiii., xiv.).

The Council of Jerusalem (xv. 1—35).

β Second missionary journey of Paul with Silas and Timothy to Asia Minor and Europe (xv. 36—xviii. 22).

γ Third missionary journey to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece, and Paul's return to Jerusalem (xviii. 23—xxi. 16).

VI. *Final Acts of St. Paul*.

His arrest, imprisonment, and defence before the Sanhedrim (xxi. 17—xxiii. 11).

His removal to Cæsarea, and his trials before Felix, Festus, and Herod Agrippa II. (xxiii. 12—xxvi. 32).

His disastrous journey to Rome (xxvii. 1—xxviii. 15).

His imprisonment and work at Rome (xxviii. 16—31).

(vi.) But an analysis alone can give no impression of the historical value of the facts recorded. St. Luke, and he alone, enables us to take our stand by the very cradle of the infant Church. Even in the first chapter we learn the priceless details that the disciples who first met at Jerusalem were only one hundred and twenty in number; that the free attendance of holy women at that earliest gathering inaugurated a new era of emancipation for half the human race; and that the Resurrection—for obviously no other adequate explanation can be suggested—had so powerfully affected the minds of “the Brethren of the Lord,” that, whereas they had hitherto been cold if not hostile to His Messianic claims, they henceforth left the world to which they had once belonged,* and braving its hatred flung in their lot with the followers of the obscure and persecuted Galileans.

(vii.) How important again is the account of the sweet and simple lives of the early believers; of their mistaken attempt at communism, and its implied failure; of the wise attitude adopted by Rabbi Gamaliel, the worthy grandson of the noble Hillel; of the brilliant career and eloquent speech of St. Stephen, which is the earliest attempt at a complete philosophy of Jewish history; of the first persecution; of St. Paul’s conversion; of the epoch-making vision of St. Peter at Joppa, which practically decided that Christianity was not to be a Jewish sect, but the religion of the world; of the manner in which the narrow and rigid Judaism of the Pharisaic Christians of Jerusalem was gradually expanded into universality; of the abandonment of insistence on circumcision and on the distinctive signs of Jewish proselytism, which was extorted, by the revelation of God in history, even from the strict Judaic attitude of St. James the Lord’s brother; of that first Christian Council at Jerusalem, which was to be the precursor of such numerous gatherings, but in which laymen no less than presbyters took a prominent part!†

How instructive again is the glimpse which St. Luke gives us that the bold initiative of preaching to uncircumcised Gentiles was due to unknown disciples who had been scattered by the very persecution in which the future Apostle of the Gentiles had taken the foremost place!‡

How much should we have lost had we not learnt from his pages the origin and first use of the name “Christian,” once a

* John vii. 4; Mark iii. 21, &c. † xi. 20; read “Greeks.”

mark of shame and the synonym of "malefactor," but afterwards the noblest of all titles, and a work which in its Greek, Hebrew, and Latin elements—being as it was a Greek translation of a Hebrew conception fitted to a Latin termination—bore a witness to Jesus from the three great languages of the ancient world.

Again St. Luke shows us how first, in the person of St. James the Elder, Christianity stood before kings and was not ashamed, and how the sudden death of a royal persecutor fulfilled the prediction that "he who fell on the stone of Christianity should be broken in pieces, and he on whom it fell should be scattered as dust."

(viii.) In the second great division of the book we watch the first eagle-flight of the young spirit of missions; we see the heroism, the endurance, the poverty, the persecution of the first missionaries; we see the messengers of heaven step from their ship for the first time upon the soil of Europe, and watch them as with the eye of a personal witness, while they passed from city to city of the Roman world. Then we sail with St. Paul through the isles of Greece to Jerusalem; we stand with him before the Jewish mob, before the Sanhedrim, before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, and almost seem to share his long stormy voyage from Cæsarea to his shipwreck at Malta, and thence to the hired room which was his prison at Rome.

(ix.) Thus the Acts of the Apostles is a book of the *Origines Christianæ*. It tells us of the Ascension with fuller details than had become known to St. Luke when he wrote the Gospel; of the first co-opted Apostle, St. Matthias; of the first Apostle who was consecrated neither of man nor by men, but by the Holy Ghost—St. Paul; of the first Pentecost; the first Christian sermon; the first Christian miracle; the first general baptism; the first persecutor; the first martyr; the first mission; the first confirmation; the first thorough breaking down of the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles; the first attempt at simony; the first deacons; the first heretic; the first baptized Gentile convert; the first European Church; the first Christian Council; the first attempt at ecclesiastical organisation; the first transference of the capital of Christianity to a Gentile city. Thus the whole book becomes a comment on one of its own phrases, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (xix. 30), while it shows us that the two best evidences of the truth of the Gospel are those which still stand visibly before the whole world, namely, Christianity and Christendom.

(x.) These facts alone will show how terrible a blank would have been left had we not been furnished by the Third Evangelist with this First Ecclesiastical History—the first and also by far

the best and greatest, brief and discontinuous as it is. It has been well observed that only from the Acts of the Apostles are we able to understand that union of the apparently antagonistic elements of Judaism and Christianity, which would otherwise be as impossible to explain as a confluence of the waters of the Tiber and the Jordan. To very few since the world began has it been granted to render to mankind two services so unique as those rendered by the retiring and modest Evangelist. In his Gospel—"the most beautiful book in the world"—he has given us an exquisite picture of the Saviour of Mankind; and in the Acts—narrating events of which he was often an eye-witness, and in which he took so honourable a share—he has used his sacred gifts of patient research, keen insight, lucid expression, and large-hearted catholicity, to enable us to watch the dawn of Christianity as it broadened and brightened into the boundless day. The Gospel and the Acts occupy but a few pages, but those few pages are among the most valuable which were ever penned by a human hand.

3. *Where was the book written?*—The place where the book was written cannot be stated with any certainty, but as it suddenly drops the curtain upon St. Paul after he had spent two years as a prisoner in his own hired room at Rome, it is at least possible that it was written during the enforced leisure which the Evangelist enjoyed during that period, and may have been given to the world at the conclusion of those two years, about A.D. 63.

4. *What were the sources on which St. Luke depended?*—The answer to this question furnishes an illustration of St. Luke's method. It was obviously not his object to narrate all the facts with which he must have been acquainted. He *selected* his materials, partly no doubt because he made it his literary habit to do so, but partly because he had special objects in view. At the beginning of his Gospel he lays claim to that thorough knowledge which is derived from careful and independent research. In writing the Acts he relies partly on facts which he had observed as an eye-witness, and partly on those which he had derived from trustworthy sources. The "*we* sections" (xvi. 10—xvii. 1, and xx. 5—xxviii. 31) are broken by the years which St. Luke appears to have spent at Philippi, but they are marked by the inimitable detail and vividness which are intrinsic signs of truth. For all the later portions of his history he could rely on the personal testimony of St. Paul, obtained during long hours of daily familiarity. If, as seems probable, he was with St. Paul during his incarceration at Caesarea, he would there have had ample opportunities of seeing and consulting the members of the Churches of Palestine, who had been familiar from the first with

the origin and progress of the new faith. His circumstances as well as his gifts placed him in an uniquely favourable position for carrying out his sacred task.

How well he used his advantages is shown by his marvellous accuracy in numbers of details which have but a remote bearing on his general purpose. We have already seen that this accuracy is signally vindicated by the subtle coincidences of his narrative with the conditions indicated by the Epistles of St. Paul—coincidences all the more remarkable because they sometimes depend on apparent contradictions. Considering how complicated and incessant were the journeyings, labours, and afflictions of the great Apostle, nothing is more certain than that no forger could have written a sketch of them without coming into contact and violent collision with facts; and also that no human ingenuity could have invented the minute particulars of resemblance and verisimilitude, even if the Epistles had lain open before him as he wrote.

But this is not all. St. Luke can be tested, in hundreds of instances, by secular as well as by sacred history, and that from the most unsuspected sources; and he triumphantly stands the test. It is not only from St. Luke, but also from Josephus, the Talmud, Tacitus, Suetonius, Seneca, and other sources, both Jewish and Pagan, that we learn something about the crowd of personages who pass each other so swiftly on the stage of his vivid narrative. The pen of an obscure provincial—of one who had perhaps been a slave at Antioch—might well have slipped in delineating characters so various, and historical surroundings so diverse, as those of the Rabbi Gamaliel; the High Priest Ananias; the Idumean family of Princes, Herod Agrippa I., and Agrippa II., and Bernice, and Drusilla; Roman procurators, like Felix and Festus; proconsuls, like Gallio, the brother of Seneca, and Sergius Paulus; officers, like Claudius Lysias and Julius the centurion;—yet there is not one sketch which we can test that is not thoroughly and even minutely accurate.

Another proof of his historic care is that he does not content himself with general titles, but in each city or province gives the exact designation of the governing authorities, however unique or rare. Thus he speaks of the *Protos* of Malta; the Recorder and Asiarchs of Ephesus; the purely local "Praetors" (as they delighted to call themselves) at Philippi; and even the Politarchs at Thessalonica. In some of these instances his accuracy has been challenged, and has only been vindicated by minute historic investigations, and sometimes by the unexpected discovery of coins, medals, and inscriptions.

The arch of Thessalonica, now in the British Museum, the excavations at Ephesus, the inscription at Soli which bears the

name of Sergius Paulus, discovered by General Cesnola, are all unsuspected witnesses of his truthful care; and Jewish and Pagan historians bear him out to the letter in his account of the famine in the days of Claudius; the vanity and the strange death of the popularity-hunting Agrippa I.; the cosmopolitan *insouciance* of his son, Agrippa II.; the greed of Felix; the fairness of Festus; the disdainful retirement of Gallio; the existence of an Italian band at Cæsarea; Claudius's decree for the expulsion of Jews from Rome; the dialect of Lycaonia; the traces left by the local legends of Baucis and Philemon, in the antique Paganism of that rude district; the silver *aediculae* of Artemis, which formed a staple trade at Ephesus; the Ephesian love of amulets and magic; the colonial privileges of Philippi; the mode of dealing with Roman prisoners, and the minutest details of ancient navigation.

Places so obscure as the Fair Havens and Lasæa at Crete can still be identified by the indications of St. Luke; and he has been proved to be exact even in so small and remote an incident as the soundings, the nature of the bottom, and the conformation of the shore off Point Koura, on the north-east side of the island of Malta.*

5. *What was St. Luke's object in writing the Acts?*—The first and simplest answer to this question is, of course, that St. Luke had received the charism of a sacred historian, and wished to delineate "alike the individual, the congregational, and the ecclesiastical life of the Christians." With a prophetic conviction of the awful importance of events which occupied but a very small portion of the world's attention, he determined to commit to writing, for the benefit of Theophilus and of the Church in general—but with special reference to Gentile Christians—the things which he had seen and known. No one felt more strongly than St. Luke that the course of the world's history was being guided, not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts. The Holy Spirit is alluded to more frequently than in any other book of the Bible—no less, indeed, than seventy-one times. The Acts might almost be called "the Gospel of the Holy Ghost."

But beside this general object I see no reason to doubt that he was guided by special considerations.

It has been charged against St. Luke, almost as if it were a

* It is true that there is an unsolved difficulty about Theudas (Acts v. 36), in which St. Luke has fallen into an anachronism *if* he and Josephus are speaking of the same person and *if* Josephus is right. But there is no proof that the Theudas of St. Luke may not be a different person; and if the Theudas intended be the same, we have far more reason to trust St. Luke than to trust the careless and often untrustworthy Jewish historian.

crime, that the Acts is a "tendency-writing," that it was expressly meant to serve as an *eirenicon*. Impressed with the holy and beautiful ideal of unity, simplicity, and peaceful gladness in the Church of Christ, he sets forth the attainment of that ideal, and renders it more possible by his mediating point of view. There was nothing otherwise than noble in such an aim, nor is St. Luke's credibility as an historian thereby more disparaged than that of any other great and honest historian who has written with an avowed bias. The truth seems to be that no great history can be written except by men of keen sensibilities and strong convictions. A cold and passionless neutrality cannot inspire the interest necessary for historical research, and all that we demand of an historian is that the view which he presents, even if it be incomplete, should yet be founded on real facts, and not upon their perversion.

Now it is undoubtedly true that in the Epistle to the Galatians, and other Epistles of St. Paul, we find traces of a more bitter antagonism between "the circumcisionists" (οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι, Gal. vi. 13), as he calls them, and the party of Christian freedom, of which he was the head. But however severe may have been the struggle, however fierce the heart-burnings (and if St. Luke passes over these with comparative lightness, he yet by no means conceals the fact that they existed), they did not preclude the spirit of a deeper unity. St. Luke, no doubt, meant to illustrate this Catholic ideal, which was nobly rendered possible by the mutual concession and forbearance of St. Paul on the one side and of the elders of the Church of Jerusalem on the other.

It must be remembered that St. Luke's narrative is extremely brief, and traverses a vast extent of ground. Under such circumstances it was natural that subjective considerations should have played their part in the selection and arrangement of his facts and narratives. If St. Luke had a bias, it was a bias far nobler, and one which gave a truer picture than could have been given from the standpoint of philosophic indifference. Under the conflicting views and partial divergences which arose among the teachers of the early Christian Church there lay a more fundamental and eternal agreement, and to Luke this great ocean of Christian unity seemed to be, as indeed it was, of far greater significance than the transient ripples which swept its surface. When there is partial disunion and profound brotherhood a noble mind, believing that the brotherhood belongs to what is true and permanent while the disunion is only partial, accidental, and superficial, will dwell mainly on the former, without making any attempt to suppress the existence of the latter.

6. *What Method does the Author follow?*—This draws our attention to two questions.

i. St. Luke has been charged, not only with producing a picture which was purposely toned down to disguise the differences of opinion between the Judaic and Christian party in the Church—a charge which rests on complete misapprehension of the scope of his work—but with the graver fault of manipulating his narratives so as to suggest an unreal parallel between the two great Apostles whose acts he chiefly sets forth. Thus, it is said, both St. Peter and St. Paul heal a cripple; they both raise the dead; they both confront sorcerers; the prominent events in the life of both are preceded by visions; both are at times severe; both are worshipped. The answer to this charge is very simple. So far as there is any resemblance between “the signs of an Apostle” wrought by either of them, they are resemblances which arise from the analogous circumstances by which they were surrounded, and the analogous gifts with which they were endowed. Moreover, the slightest examination suffices to show that the *differences* of the events and miracles are at least as observable as their general likeness.

ii. St. Luke's method has been described by the German word *sparsamkeit*, which implies the economical selections of those details only which seemed alike illustrative and permanently valuable, with the further conditions that he could vouch for them if possible by personal testimony, or, if not, by documents or information of indisputable authority. The special points on which he desired to lay emphasis have been variously stated because his book is many-sided in its character. We may safely assert that his primary object was to illustrate the growth of Christianity in the Church itself and its spread throughout the world, and to show that this was due to “the power of Christ's resurrection” and the grace of the Holy Spirit. All other objects were subordinate to that of setting forth how Christianity burst the swaddling-bands of Judaism, and conquered the hostility of the heathen. In furtherance of this design the book begins at Jerusalem and ends at Rome; it begins when Christianity is still a strictly Jewish sect of the circumcised consisting of one hundred and twenty persons, and it ends when converts could be counted by thousands, and all Gentile Christians were authoritatively emancipated from the minute and burdensome requirements hitherto demanded of all proselytes to the Mosaic law.

iii. Judged from this point of view there is no real abruptness in the close of the Acts. It ends with a word of the most weighty and sonorous cadence, ἀκωλύτως, an *epitrite* (ο - - -) evidently chosen as a suitable termination; just as the word ἐπέειδεν, an *antispastus* (ο - - ο), is, in accordance with ancient laws of taste, chosen as the first word of the Gospel. We may be sure that St. Luke ends where he intended to end, and by breaking off at

that point he has given to his treatise a magnificent unity. He has shown us how, in thirty years, the Gospel had passed from the capital of Judæa to the capital of the world; how it made conquests alike among Samaritans, Greeks, Asiatics, and Romans; how it had, with Divine adaptability, met the needs of learned Athenian philosophers and great Jewish rabbis, no less than those of the poor and ignorant Lystrenian peasantry; how the sceptre of righteousness had (so to speak) been transferred from the hands of the Jew to those of the Gentile; how the centre of gravity of the Universal Church had been shifted from the exclusive Semitic city to the huge metropolis of the ancient world.

iv. It is no doubt strange that St. Luke sheds no gleam of light on the result of St. Paul's trial at Rome, or on any of his subsequent fortunes. The curtain drops quite suddenly, and we cannot but deeply regret the absence of even one more sentence which would have saved reams of future and apparently endless controversy. We are left to conjectures in order to explain the sudden silence. Did St. Luke merely break off at the point to which he had brought down his narrative when his book first saw the light? Did he intend to add a third book to the previous two? Did he himself die at the close of St. Paul's first two years at Rome? Was he prevented from carrying the narrative further by the terrible outbreak of the Neronian persecution, which reduced Christianity to the condition of a *religio illicita*, and which would render the possession of any Christian book extremely perilous.

This is perhaps the most probable of these vague conjectures. When the heathen were raging against Christianity with the virulence of which we read the traces in Tacitus, and Juvenal, and Martial, and Suetonius, and Pliny, a single *traditor* might hand over to the Roman agents a book which would suffice to involve a whole Christian community in ruin, unless all expressions unfavourable to the Government were concealed in strange cryptographs unintelligible to the Pagan world, as was the Apocalypse of St. John. Even if St. Luke did not himself perish in the Neronian persecution in Rome, or in one of its local outbursts in the provinces, it would have been impossible for him to write with historic plainness of the guilty Emperor, that diademed Wild Beast of the Revelation, who revelled in the blood of the saints and martyrs.

7. *When was the Book written?*—We have nothing but internal evidence to rely upon for the answer. It was almost certainly written before the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, for it is scarcely conceivable that otherwise there should have been no allusion to an event which shook the whole religious world far more power-

fully than the Pagan world was shaken by the sack of Rome in A.D. 410. There is not so much as a single allusion to imply that the Holy City was not still existing and flourishing when the book appeared. We have therefore good reason to believe that it was permitted to see the light as soon as it was finished, and that this was soon after the period at which it closed.

8. *Characteristics.*—I will conclude with two remarks.

One is the poetic grandeur which attaches, if not to the composition of the book itself, yet to the historic circumstances which it so vividly narrates. One of the finest descriptions in the mighty iambics of Greek tragedy is that in which Æschylus tells how the fire-signals of Agamemnon flashed from hill to hill the message of the fall of Troy, and how the "courier-flame" gleamed from Ida, and leapt over the sea till its last blaze from the summit of Cithæron aroused the watchman on the roof of the Atridæ. The story of the Acts has always reminded me of this noble scene. St. Luke, a poet and more than a poet, sets forth with exquisite skill how the beacon-lights of Christianity shone from Jerusalem to Antioch, and from Antioch to Ephesus, and to Troas, and then, leaping over the sea to Philippi, gleamed on to Athens and Corinth, until at last they were kindled in the very palace and Prætorian camp of the Cæsars in Imperial Rome. The beam of dawn which had shone amid the wintry darkness at Bethlehem had broadened so gloriously that in one short generation it had filled Asia, Greece, and Italy with the light of heaven.

Lastly, the Acts of the Apostles, besides its supreme historic interest and importance, is full of the deepest spiritual lessons. Luther said with justice that it might be regarded as nothing less than a comment on the Epistles of St. Paul. Church history often furnishes very sad reading, except to those who delight in the growth of formalism. But this faithful and glowing history of the Church's earliest days shows us her pure ideal before her orange-flower had begun to fade. It reveals to us the true secret of the Church's invincibility as consisting in her simplicity, her sincerity, her faith and courage even in the midst of savage persecution. It shows us that "God is the only final public opinion," and that "one with God is always in a majority." Never can the golden candlestick of any Church be removed if it be true to the high lessons of faith, and hope, and love, which enabled the Church of the Apostles to triumph over the banded antagonism of the world's vice and hatred, and to prevail, not only over the idolatry without, but also over the false types of orthodoxy and false types of goodness which sometimes arise within her fold.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

ROMANS.

1. *Paul's Desire to Visit Rome.*—That the Apostle of the Gentiles should cherish a desire to preach Christ at Rome was to be expected. Until he could unfurl the Christian flag in the imperial city he must have felt himself delayed among the outposts, not penetrating to the citadel. He had always pursued the plan of visiting the busiest centres of population, and this plan necessarily led his thoughts to Rome. It was the true metropolis, to which every road led, which received from all the provinces whatever was of interest or value, and distributed to the world law, order, civilisation. Even while living in Ephesus he felt himself gravitating to the greater city. Even then he expressed it as his fixed resolve, "I must also see Rome" (Acts xix. 21). Often prevented from accomplishing this purpose (Rom. i. 13), delayed by the claims of the churches he had founded in Asia and Macedonia, he at last sees some prospect of being able to set his face westwards, and hopes to reach even Spain (Rom. xv. 23).

Only one duty remained for him to discharge before starting; he must carry to Jerusalem the funds which the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia had collected for the poor of the holy city. This was a duty he could not delegate, because he was in hopes that the charity and brotherliness of the Gentile Christians might knit together the Jewish and Gentile sections of the Christian community, and might thus accomplish more than his own reasonings had accomplished, or at any rate might form a living union between parts his reasonings had outwardly stitched together (Rom. xv. 20—28). As soon as these funds were handed over to the authorities at Jerusalem he meant to start for Rome. In this expectation he was disappointed, and ultimately reached the metropolis as a prisoner, after two years' detention in Cæsarea.

But before leaving Corinth for Jerusalem he writes this Epistle to the Romans to intimate his intention, and as far as possible to pave the way for his teaching.

2. *Date.*—From the Book of Acts (xx. 1—3) we learn that Paul's journey to Jerusalem with the contributions for the poor saints was made at the close of his wintering in Corinth, and presumably in the spring of the year 59 A.D. This also was the date of his letter to Rome, which he sent apparently by the hand of Phœbe (xvi. 1), a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea, the port of Corinth. He wrote it while living in the house of Gaius (xvi. 23), who was a Corinthian (1 Cor. i. 14). It would also appear from 2 Tim. iv. 20 that Erastus, who sends his salutations to the Christians in Rome (xvi. 23), was chamberlain of Corinth.

3. *The Church in Rome.*—Such being the immediate occasion of this Epistle its contents would necessarily be determined by the character of the Church to which it was addressed. Unfortunately very little is known of the origin and constituent elements of the Church in Rome. For more than a hundred years there had been a large and growing and influential Jewish population in Rome, and this population was necessarily in regular communication with Jerusalem. Jews from Rome heard Peter preach at Pentecost, and when they returned to the capital they no doubt carried with them the Gospel they had heard. And so far the tradition which ascribes to this Church a Petrine origin is probably correct. The nucleus of a Christian community thus formed would be augmented in the natural course of the ceaseless communication which was maintained between Rome and the outlying provinces. And yet from the account given us in the Book of Acts (xxviii. 17) of Paul's reception in Rome, it would appear as if even at that time, nearly thirty years after Pentecost, the leading Jews of Rome knew little of the Christian Church or its tenets. This ignorance on their part, whether real or feigned, cannot be accepted as evidence that there were no Jewish Christians there. For both the edict of Claudius, which a few years before had expelled the Jews from Rome on the ground of riots connected with Christianity (*Chresto impulsore*), and the massacre of the Christians by Nero in the year 64 A.D., show that, though little might be known of their belief, Christians were recognised as an appreciable element in the Roman population, and that to a casual observer the Christians and the Jews were not distinctly separable.

4. *Gentile and Jewish Elements.*—If we examine the Epistle itself with a view to discover whether the Jewish or the Gentile element predominated in the Church at Rome, we are led to the conclusion that while the majority of the Christians were Gentiles,

there were also in the Church many Jews and proselytes. Among those to whom Paul sends salutations are kinsmen of his own, who must, therefore, have been pure-blooded Jews (xvi. 7). There are also Aquila and Priscilla, Mary and Apelles, all Jewish names (cf. Horace, *Sat.* I. v. 100). The majority of the names are, however, Gentile, and for the most part Greek.

At the date of Paul's Epistle the active, pushing, and pliable Greek was possessing himself of every department of commercial and social enterprise in Rome, so much so that shortly after this time the Roman satirist upbraids the metropolis with having become a Greek city (Juv., *Sat.* iii. 60). It is not surprising, then, to find that the names in this letter are Greek rather than Latin, that the language used, both in this letter and in the earliest literature of the Church of Rome, is Greek, and that in the catacombs the Greek characters so often appear in the inscriptions. The same mingling of Jew and Gentile in the Christian community at Rome is apparent in the substance of the Epistle. Sometimes Paul explicitly addresses himself to Gentiles, as in xi. 13; xv. 16; i. 13; sometimes it is obvious that he has Jews in view as he writes, as in ii. 17; iv. 1.

5. *The Type of Christianity at Rome.*—But it is not enough to determine the proportion which the Christians of Gentile origin bore to those of Jewish origin in the Church at Rome; it must, if possible, also be determined what type of Christianity they had adopted. Did the Pauline or the distinctively Jewish Christian view of the Gospel prevail? In other words, did they believe that Gentiles in order to become Christians must first become Jews, or did they understand that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile?

Lipsius (*Protestantenbibel*) thinks that everything in the Epistle is meant for Jewish Christian readers. The writer, he says, "assumes throughout that he is addressing readers of Jewish education who are also accustomed to the Jewish methods. The hypotheses from which he sets out, the conceptions with which he works, the arguments from the maxims and examples of the Old Testament Scripture, the express appeal to the reader's knowledge of the law—all this is only intelligible if the Apostle wishes to influence the Jewish Christian mind. . . . The Pauline Gospel can have had few, if any, adherents at that time in Rome, and no doubt even those believers who had been gathered from among the Gentiles were altogether under the influence of the Jewish spirit. Pfeiderer (*Hibbert Lectures*, 139) thinks that the Epistle suggests that the relations between the Jewish and Gentile sections of the Church were strained, that the healthy development of the Church was thus placed in daily greater peril, and the more so as through the rapid growth of the Gentile

section, the Jewish, which had undoubtedly formed the principal element originally, had sunk into the position of a powerless minority.

Even this more moderate statement makes more of the strained relations between the two sections of the Church than the Epistle warrants. Certainly the majority was free from all Jewish Christian scrupulosity; for Paul feels himself impelled to exhort the Church to receive into fellowship the weakly scrupulous believer who observed days and refused to eat what had been offered to idols. And it is plain that had the Church as a whole been pronouncedly anti-Pauline, and tainted with Jewish-Christian views, Paul could not have spoken of its members as "full of all goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (xv. 15). There is no evidence in the Epistle that there was an anti-Pauline party in the Church. No doubt such a party might at any time arise, for Jewish Christianity was merely a one-sided exaggeration of a view of the Jew's relation to Christ, which must have inevitably suggested itself to every Jewish mind. And certainly this letter cuts the ground from the Jewish Christian position by proving that Jews and Gentiles alike are under sin, and alike must be saved by grace. But this is done without any polemical pushing of principles to their issues, or explicit assault upon the Jewish Christian position such as we find in the Epistle to the Galatians. The allusions to that type of Christianity are incidental, and are not the main object of the Epistle.

6. *Object of the Epistle.*—What, then, is the object of the letter which determines all its contents? In substance the letter is a justification of the Apostle's mission to the Gentiles; a justification first to his own mind, and secondly to all whom it may concern. He habitually considered himself "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" (xv. 16); and among the Gentiles he made no distinctions, but recognised that he was bound to carry the Gospel to the highly civilised as well as to the rude and uneducated; or, as he himself puts it, he felt himself to be "debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise." Accordingly he longed to bring the Gospel into contact with civilisation in its highest form, with Roman society, for he was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (i. 15, 16). But in proposing to do so he was conscious that he was taking a new step, that he had reached a crisis in his career, and was more distinctly than ever giving himself to the Gentiles. It was natural, therefore, that at this time he should review the situation, and should make clear to his own mind the relation of Jew to Gentile, and the relation of each to the Gospel. And

in this Epistle he explains his fundamental thoughts on these subjects.

He explains why he considers the Gospel needful, what the Gospel is, and in what consists its sufficiency for Jew and Gentile alike. He does so with less reference to the actual condition of the Church he writes to than is usually found in his Epistles; but he cannot write in oblivion of the fact so forcibly impressed on his own experience that in the Christian Church two great classes have to be considered, Jew and Gentile. His object in writing is, as he explicitly declares (xv. 15, 16), to put his correspondents in mind that he was to be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles; and his letter accordingly is an exposition of the applicability of the Gospel to the Gentiles. And this he effects, in great measure, by showing that the fact of the Jews having the law does not put them on a different platform from the Gentiles; that such Jews as had been saved before Christ came or as were saved now, were saved on terms available for Gentiles. In short, there is throughout the Epistle constant reference to the law, the prejudices, the destiny of the Jews, to illustrate the main purpose of the writer and throw light on the salvability of the Gentiles.

7. *Analysis of Contents.*—This will more clearly appear if we briefly analyse the contents of the Epistle. He means, he says, to preach the Gospel at Rome, because he believes that it is “the power of God unto salvation,” not to one race only, but “to every one that believeth”; to the Jew first, no doubt, in the order of God’s providence, “but also to the Greek” (i. 16). The Gospel, that is, is the medium through which God’s power to lift men out of moral evil and bring them into perfect correspondence with His own righteousness is exercised. That this is God’s grand purpose with men is evident from the results which attend unrighteousness—“the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (i. 18).

Of these results the inhabitants of Rome had ample experience (i. 21—32). But the frightful wickedness of the Gentiles and the manifest punishment which followed were no reasons for the Jewish contempt and hopelessness. Rather did the scorn with which the Jew looked on the immoral and ignorant Gentile reflect on his own sin against the light of the law. If the Gentile who knew not the law was, by his immorality, beyond God’s mercy, equally or more so was the Jew who knew the law, and yet did not observe it. Not the having the law but the keeping it was righteousness; not the circumcision of the flesh but of the spirit saves (ii. *passim*). If so, is the Jew righteous and the Gentile condemned? Alas! the law itself says, “There is none

righteous, no, not one"; and what it says it of course says to them who are under the law; to Jews, not to Gentiles. It means, "There is no Jew righteous, no, not one" (iii. 19). If, then, men are to be justified, it must be not by the Jewish law but by faith; by that which the Gentile as well as the Jew may have. Jew and Gentile alike must put away boasting, and on an equal footing of humility accept God's grace. Thus was even Abraham justified (iv.); righteousness was imputed to him without works meriting it and without circumcision. As he believed God, and trusted that God would bless him, and did not think of earning the blessing God promised of His own grace, so must we accept the peace offered us in Christ. For it is in Christ God's love is now shown, and in Christ His righteousness is now revealed (v.). Neither will our abandonment of the idea that we must earn the blessedness God gives lead us to undervalue holiness and live in sin. On the contrary, the acceptance of Christ and the life that is in Christ involves renunciation of sin and consecration of the whole self to God. The spirit of life which is in Christ makes men truly sons of God, and carries them on to perfect righteousness and lasting glory (vi.—viii.).

But the very triumph Paul feels in so saving a Gospel suggests to him the condition of his unbelieving fellow-countrymen, and in chapters ix., x., and xi. he discloses his thoughts regarding their future. His turning to the Gentiles was not agreeable to his feelings. Not only so, he was perplexed in his mind by the apparent futility of the Gospel among the very people who, in so many respects, were most carefully prepared to receive it. The Jews seemed to have been intended to be specially Christ's people, but Christ's coming had really alienated and ruined them. This unexpected result demanded a philosophy of history or scheme of providence which might satisfactorily account for it. Wherever Paul went he found that the prepared Jews did not accept the Messiah as readily as the Gentiles did. What did this mean? Have the Jews no advantage?

Many of Paul's enemies might think that he, the universalist who broke down all walls of partition, would say the advantage was small. Many of the Gentiles might suppose that he who had been insulted, beaten, outraged by the Jews would be careless of their fate. But, on the contrary, his heart bleeds for them and yearns over them. He would accept any fate for himself, if thereby he could alter the fate they had brought on themselves by their unbelief. He will not suffer the Gentiles to suppose that, because he turns to them, the Jews are for ever cast off by God. He is convinced their rejection is but for a time, and that their acceptance of Christ will be as a new birth to the world.

Their unbelief has sent Paul to the Gentiles; if, then, "the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (xi. 15). Then follows a full and beautiful exhibition of the duties and character resulting from this Gospel Paul preaches, and the Epistle concludes with the usual salutations.

8. *Authenticity and Integrity*.—The authenticity of this Epistle is not doubted by any, but suspicions have been cast on its integrity. It has been thought strange that St. Paul should send salutations to so many people in a Church he had never visited; strange, also, that so many of these salutations should be addressed to persons whose names are associated rather with Ephesus than with Rome. The repeated terminations to the Epistle at xv. 33, xvi. 20, 24, 27, have also been a puzzle. Even conservative critics have suggested that perhaps the letter was issued in more forms than one, and, being despatched to different Churches, copies might exist with different salutations and different conclusions.

FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

1. *Corinth.*—At the date of St. Paul's visit to Corinth it was the chief city of the Roman province of Achaia and the headquarters of the Proconsul. Its natural situation on the Isthmus, commanding on the eastern side the port of Cenchrea, and on the western that of Lechæum, had from the earliest times given it importance. Rather than encounter the risks of doubling Cape Malea "of bad fame," the seamen bringing goods from Asia to Italy preferred to unlade at the one port and relade at the other. So commonly was this done that arrangements were made for conveying the smaller ships themselves across the Isthmus, and shortly after the Apostle's visit the Emperor Nero cut the first turf of a proposed, but never finished, canal. To one approaching the Isthmus from either sea, the most conspicuous object was an abrupt and massive rock, nearly two thousand feet high, known as the Acrocorinthus. On a slightly elevated platform at the northern base of this citadel the city of Corinth was built.

But in the year 146 B.C. the ancient city was completely destroyed by the Roman general Mummius. For a century it lay demolished and deserted; but in the year 44 B.C. Julius Cæsar rebuilt and repeopled it, chiefly with Roman veterans and freedmen. Hence, many of the Corinthians mentioned by St. Paul bear names which indicate their Roman or servile origin, Quartus, Crispus, Gaius, Justus, Fortunatus, Achaicus. The city soon regained its former size and opulence, and also, unfortunately, its old reputation for profligacy. As Renan says, "the whole city was like a vast pandemonium, where the numerous strangers, the sailors particularly, resorted to spend their wealth foolishly." "To live as they do at Corinth" was, in St. Paul's time, the equivalent for living in luxury and licentiousness. It

was a city, too, in which Roman brutality and Oriental vice were not the only obstacles to Christianity. Greek factiousness and vanity, the sophistries of a shallow philosophy and the verbal victories of the demagogue, found for themselves a congenial soil in this mixed population. No city could give a fuller representation of the various weaknesses and vices of the ancient world, or seem a less promising field for the Gospel.

2. *Condition of the Church.*—How the Apostle of the Gentiles reached this focus of heathenism, how he founded a Christian Church, and how he defeated the machinations of the unbelieving Jews may be read in the Book of Acts, c. xviii. For eighteen months he remained in Corinth, partly, no doubt, induced by his success, partly by perception of the dangers ahead. At length, in the spring of the year 54 A.D., he leaves to be present at Pentecost in Jerusalem. After celebrating the feast he proceeds to Antioch, where he spends "some time," and after visiting Phrygia, Galatia, and other parts of Asia Minor, he reaches Ephesus either late in 54 or early in 55. Here he remains for about three years. Meanwhile, Apollos, who had made a marked impression in Ephesus, had gone to Achaia, and was no doubt helpful in restraining the evil tendencies of the Corinthian Church.

But in spite of all Christian effort the pressure of their heathen surroundings was too much for many of the Corinthian converts, and in 1 Cor. v. 9, 10, there is trace of a letter previously written to them by St. Paul, in which he had prohibited intercourse with fornicators, idolaters, covetous persons, and extortioners. Either wilfully or ignorantly misunderstanding him, they had replied that society in Corinth was wholly composed of such persons, and that compliance with his prohibition involved their going out of the world altogether. With this reply they laid before him a number of other difficulties (1 Cor. vii. 1; viii. 1; xii. 1, &c.). This letter from Corinth, together with the oral information he had received from members of Chloe's household, who had come to Ephesus, calls forth the first extant Epistle to the Corinthians.

3. *The Questions before the Apostle.*—The sad state of matters in the Church of Corinth, which is disclosed in this Epistle, shows us the kind of work required of one who in those days had the care of all the Churches. A host of difficult questions poured in upon him, questions regarding the very foundations of the faith, questions of morality and of casuistry, questions regarding public worship and social intercourse. Are we to dine with our heathen relatives? May we intermarry with them; or, if already married, are we to divorce our heathen partners; or may we

marry at all? Can slaves continue in the service of heathen masters? Can we restrain those who speak with tongues and are inspired?

But the mere difficulty of answering such questions was not that which filled Paul's eyes with tears as he answered their inquiries (2 Cor. ii. 4). It was the self-satisfied vanity that shone through even their request for advice (viii. 1), the evidence which some of their questions bore to the presence of a restless Greek intellectualism (xv. 35) and litigiousness (vi. 1—11), and of a potent residuum of Corinthian sensuality (vi. 16; x. 8; xi. 21), and above all, the tidings that had reached him of their party-spirit and of their scandalizing even the heathen by retaining in their communion a man who had married his step-mother (v. 2); it was this which excited in Paul's mind the deepest misgivings regarding the future of the Church.

The calmness and good temper with which he exposes the sin of getting drunk at the Lord's table or the scandalous disorder of their meetings for worship are not less remarkable than the sagacity with which he pronounces upon their various difficulties, and the ease, promptitude, and finality with which he sets them free from errors of opinion. We can never be sufficiently thankful that in that primitive age, when the Christian Church was "pawing to get free" from its natal clay of heathenism, it found one strong hand to help it, one sane and balanced judgment to mark out boldly and clearly the boundaries of right and wrong.

4. *Scope of the First Epistle.*—No analysis of this Epistle need be given, for its divisions are well marked. It consists of lucid judgments on a series of points, and not of one prolonged argument whose steps might call for explanation. After the usual introduction the writer rebukes their divisions and party-spirit (i. 10—iv. 21); in chapters v. and vi. he alludes to the scandals which had arisen by unlawful alliances and by a readiness to carry brethren before heathen tribunals; he then discusses the questions relating to marriage in vii., and in viii., ix., and x. the difficulties arising in connection with idol-sacrifices. The abuses which had crept into their meetings for worship, the unveiling of women, and the irregularities in administering the Lord's Supper, are rebuked and corrected in c. xi. This leads to a full explanation of the principles of Christian fellowship, of the relative value of the diverse gifts possessed by the various members of the body of Christ, and of the order which should be observed in the use of these gifts (xii., xiii., xiv.). Then follows the argument in favour of the resurrection (xv.), and the Epistle closes with the usual personal explanations and greetings.

5. *Parties in the Church.*—The mention of four parties in the Church of Corinth has been supposed to give countenance to the Tübingen idea that between Paul and the original Apostles there existed an irreconcilable difference in doctrine and in feeling. Closer examination of the facts dispels this idea. That Paul and Apollos were friendly, and that Paul was anxious that Apollos should renew his labours in Corinth, is obvious from xvi. 12 of this Epistle. It is clear, therefore, that there could be no material difference between the Gospel preached by the one and that preached by the other; and the assumption by members of the Corinthian Church of the name of Paul or Apollos as their leader could mean no more than that some admired the one more than the other. Apollos probably presented the Gospel in a more philosophic garb and with more of the graces of the orator. The manner in which St. Paul speaks of the parties in the Church puts it beyond question that it was the unseemliness of personal preferences, and not the danger of heretical teaching he had in view.

The same remarks apply to the party who said, "We are of Cephas." But who were those who said, "We are of Christ"? They could only be persons who plumed themselves on having heard Christ Himself, and who piqued themselves on depending on no Apostle or teacher. Of these men the Apostle speaks, in the Second Epistle, in language of extreme severity. He ironically calls them "overmuch Apostles" (xi. 5; xii. 11), and even denounces them as "false Apostles" (xi. 13). From his description of them it may be gathered that they were native Jews who came to Corinth with letters of recommendation, and sought to destroy the influence of St. Paul and substantiate their own claims to authority.

6. *Date of the First Epistle.*—It would appear from xvi. 8, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost," that St. Paul wrote this First Epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus, and early in the year. It is not absolutely certain what year this was. We know that he left Ephesus shortly after despatching the letter, and worked his way through Macedonia to Corinth, where he wintered. Leaving Corinth in early spring he made his way to Jerusalem, where he was arrested, and after being confined two years in Cæsarea, he was sent to Rome. This relegation of the Apostle to the imperial tribunal occurred shortly after Felix had been recalled and had been replaced by Festus. But whether this event belongs to the year 60 or 61 is uncertain. If Felix was recalled in 60 A.D., then 1 Corinthians was written in the spring of 57; if in 61 A.D., then the Epistle belongs to the spring of 58.

7. *Date of the Second Epistle.*—The relative, though not the absolute date of 2 Corinthians, is also easily fixed from the various allusions to the writer's movements which it contains. By these allusions (i. 8—10; ii. 12, 13; vii. 6) we can trace St. Paul's movements and feelings as he passed through Asia Minor from Ephesus to Troas, and thence to Macedonia, where at length Titus joined him with reassuring news from Corinth. It was on receipt of this news he penned the Second Epistle, so that it is separated from the First by only a few months, and was sent from Macedonia while Paul was on his way to Corinth.

8. *Its Purpose.*—The object of the letter was chiefly to express his satisfaction at the good results of his former letter and of the mission of Titus. He first of all endeavours to remove any soreness which might be lingering in the minds of the Corinthians owing to his visiting Macedonia before coming to Corinth. He had originally intended to pass through Corinth on his way to Macedonia (i. 16), and had abandoned this plan not because of mere fickleness, or because it now suited him better to adopt another, but because he could not bear to come among them merely to rebuke and find fault (i. 17; ii. 13). While waiting for such tidings from Corinth as would enable him to visit them in friendliness and with approval he preaches the Gospel as he has opportunity, and the mention of this leads him to indulge in a glowing eulogy of the Gospel and its power (ii. 14; vi. 10). At this point in the Epistle (vi. 11) he reverts to the condition of the Corinthian Church, and urges the necessity of Christians living separate from scandalous sinners. This he believes the Corinthians were now endeavouring to do; so Titus has told him; and therefore he does not regret having pained them by warnings and rebukes which have borne this good fruit (vii.). He is also happy to acknowledge their charity in contributing to the support of the poor of Jerusalem (viii., ix.). But this grateful and encouraging tone is changed when in the tenth chapter he proceeds to expose those who had come among them professing to have their Gospel from Christ Himself, and striving to undermine the authority of St. Paul. In a singularly powerful and eloquent passage he disposes of their pretensions, and explains on what his own authority rests (x., xi., xii.). These things, he concludes by saying, he prefers to write, that when he comes he may have nothing disagreeable to say.

These two Epistles are accepted as authentic by even the most hostile critics.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

GALATIANS.

1. *Who were the Galatians?*—This Epistle is addressed to “the Churches of Galatia” (i. 2). But where these Churches were situated, and when founded, it is impossible to determine with precision. This difficulty arises from the circumstance that the name *Galatia* may either be used ethnologically of the region inhabited by the Celtic tribes known as Galatian, or politically of the Roman province which included Lycaonia, Isauria, and parts of Phrygia and Pisidia. It would appear, however, from the book of Acts (xiii. 14; xiv. 6; xvi. 6), that Luke, and probably, therefore, Paul, used these names of countries in their geographical and not in their political sense. Lystra and Derbe are spoken of as cities of Lycaonia, not of Galatia; Antioch is described as belonging to Pisidia; and Phrygia and Galatia are spoken of as distinct regions. The probability therefore is that by Galatia is meant the region lying to the north-east of Phrygia, and crossed by the river Halys. It was here that the descendants of the Celtic tribes who had invaded the country in the third century B.C. were to be found. The three principal tribes, the Trocmi, the Tolistobogii, the Tectosages, had each a chief town, named respectively Tavium, Pessinus, and Ancyra, but in which of these cities, if in any of them, the Apostle had founded a Church, we do not know.

Confirmation of the view that the Churches of Galatia had at least a mixture of Celtic blood is found in the character of their members as revealed by this Epistle. Ancient writers remarked upon the impressible, eager, and fickle disposition of the Celts; upon their vanity, quarrelsomeness, and sensuality. Michelet describes his own people as true children of the Gael, prompt to learn, prompt to despise, and greedy of new things; light, excitable, sensual. This character appears in the persons addressed in this Epistle. They had readily received the Gospel, but as readily relinquished it. They were sensual (vi. 8), vain (v. 26), quarrelsome (v. 15).

2. *The Occasion of the Epistle.*—If “the Churches of Galatia” had meant the Churches in the Roman province of Galatia, then we should have a full account of their foundation, for no part of Luke’s narrative is more complete and distinct than that which tells of the Apostle’s preaching in Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra. But, so far as can be gathered from Acts, in Galatia proper Paul apparently did not even mean to preach, but while passing through the country on his way to Troas or Bithynia he fell ill, and was compelled to interrupt his journey (Gal. iv. 13). Seizing the opportunity afforded by this enforced delay, he preached the Gospel and found extraordinary acceptance (iv. 14, 15). The Galatians were unconscious of, or seemed to overlook anything insignificant or repulsive in Paul’s appearance, and showed him the utmost attention.

At first the new converts “ran well,” but when Paul visited them about two years after, on his way from Jerusalem to Ephesus, he perceived symptoms of defection and weariness in well-doing which caused him anxiety. Judaizing teachers had found access to these young Gentile communities, and had to some extent persuaded them that only by passing through Judaism could any one become a Christian. The law of Moses, the right of circumcision, the observance of Jewish fast days were pressed upon them, and so skilfully that many were wavering. Paul’s visit was opportune, and no doubt helpful in checking defection from the pure faith he had taught. He “strengthened all the disciples” (Acts xviii. 23). But his departure was the signal for further relapse. Shortly after his arrival in Ephesus such accounts of the success of the Judaizers reached him as impelled him to write this Epistle.

3. *Nature of the Controversy.*—St. Paul himself does not seem to have known who these teachers were. “Who hath bewitched you?” he says (iii. 1). It is not likely, therefore, that they used the name of any of the older Apostles. And no special reason for their coming to Galatia need be sought; for the question of the relation of Gentile Christians to the Mosaic law was sure, sooner or later, to emerge in every Church in which there were any Jewish Christians. The prompt and easy solution of the difficulty, or its elevation into a matter of serious dissension and irreconcilable party strife, depended of course on how it was met and dealt with. The Judaizers who maintained that to become a Christian a man must first become a Jew, had much to say for themselves. The law was a divine institution and could not be abrogated or neglected. The promises were given solely to the Jews, to Abraham and his seed. The Messiah was the Messiah of the Jews. Jesus Himself was circumcised and kept the whole law; the original Apostles did the same.

Besides, if the Gentile converts were not enjoined to keep the law, how were they to escape from the immoralities in which they had been brought up? Such arguments were specious; but had they prevailed, Christianity would have dwindled into a short-lived Jewish sect. In the case of the Galatians other arguments had been added to these. Paul's authority was questioned. He had not been of the original twelve. Moreover, it was insinuated that he could not object on principle to circumcision, because when it suited him he enjoined it, as in the case of Timothy. If, therefore, he had not enjoined it on the Galatians, it was through a desire to please men and make the reception of the gospel easier to them.

4. *Paul's Doctrinal Position.*—The occasion, then, was of a kind to call out the full strength of the Apostle of the Gentiles. And never with as few words was a great controversy disposed of. In the first two chapters he disposes of the insinuations against his authority as an Apostle; in the next two he shows the relation of the law to Christ, or of Judaism to Christianity; in the last two he refutes the allegation that liberty and licence are the same. To the disparagement of his Apostolic authority he gives a threefold reply. First, declaring himself to be an Apostle, "not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father"; he proves from his movements after his conversion to Christianity that it was impossible he should have received his knowledge of the Gospel from men. In point of fact he had gone at first into Arabia, and when at length he did go to Jerusalem he saw only Peter (i.). Second, it was only after many years of preaching that at length he went to confer with the original Apostles at Jerusalem, and even then, so far from receiving any additional light from them, they approved of his teaching, gave him the right hand of fellowship, and encouraged him in his work (ii. 1—10). Third, when Peter himself came to Antioch he ate with the uncircumcised Gentiles, which no strict Jew would have done. In Paul's opinion Peter thus surrendered the whole Judaizing position, for, as he says, if one who was himself a Jew neglected the strictest Jewish regulations, how could he in consistency command Gentiles to observe them? Paul convinced Peter of this, and thus, at one and the same time, illustrated his own authority and made good his doctrinal position (ii. 11—21).

The dogmatic significance of the demand that the Gentiles should keep the whole law is next examined by Paul. And here he first appeals to their own experience. They had received the Spirit; that is, they had in themselves the earnest of salvation. Had this great possession become theirs by the observance of the law? They knew it was not so, but "by the hearing of

faith" (iii. 1—5). It was so even in the case of Abraham, the typical, justified man. Whatever blessing he had he received by faith (iii. 6—9). The law indeed has power only to curse, and from this curse Christ came to redeem us (iii. 10—14). Besides, long before the law was heard of, the promise had been given to Abraham, and could not be made of none effect by any institution which succeeded it. The promise was first and held the field. Not that the law was useless; far from it. The law was added to show men what sin and righteousness are, and to stimulate men to long for the fulfilment of the promise, the coming of the Spirit. The law thus discharged the function of the slave who took the boys to school, or of the guardian who took charge of persons under age; but when the fulness of time comes the guardian is no more needed, the full-grown son receives the spirit of his Father and needs no outward control. This is what has happened in Christ (iii. 15; iv. 7). But the Galatians had persisted in carrying their childish customs into their mature years. Lastly, from the law itself Paul convinces them that there is a better thing, even freedom. This he does by using as an allegory the story of Ishmael and Isaac (iv. 21—31).

In the third division of the Epistle (v.) he proceeds to vindicate Christian freedom against all aspersions; first of all exhorting them to stand fast in their liberty, and not to put themselves under bondage to minute observances (v. 1—12), and then warning them against using this liberty as an occasion to the flesh (v. 13; vi. 10). In a brief conclusion, written with his own hand in the large letters (vi. 11) that distinguished his writing from the more clerkly writing of his amanuensis, he contrasts his own affectionate attitude towards them with the selfish aims of the Judaizers.

5. *Date of the Epistle.*—Owing to the absence from this Epistle of allusions to the writer's circumstances, and to those who were with him, it is not easy to fix its date. In the address he unites with himself "all the brethren who are with me" (i. 2), but names none. The stress laid upon the suddenness of the Galatian declension—"I marvel that ye are *so soon* removed from him that called you" (i. 6)—has inclined some to place the letter as early as possible in the Apostle's Ephesian residence. It has also been argued from 1 Cor. xvi. 1, that before these words were written, that is before the last year of the writer's residence in Ephesus, he was again on good terms with the Churches of Galatia. On the other hand it may very reasonably be argued that if the Epistles to the Corinthians were written after that to the Galatians, there would be discernible deeper traces of the conflict with Judaizing teachers.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

EPHESIANS.

1. *The Apostle's Visits to Ephesus.*—On Paul's first visit to Ephesus (Acts xviii. 19) he was exceptionally well received by the Jews, who, before they allowed him to depart, extracted from him a promise that he would return. Before he was able to fulfil this promise the impression he had made on the Ephesian Jews was greatly deepened by the eloquence of Apollos (Acts xviii. 24—28). So promising a field was thus opened to Paul that when he returned to Ephesus he was induced to remain there for nearly three years. His very success, however, roused the hostility of the craftsmen, whose livelihood seemed to be endangered by the secession of Diana's worshippers. It was still perilous for him to visit Ephesus the year following (Acts xx. 16), but we gather from 1 Tim. i. 3, that he did again visit this Church. Next to Rome itself Ephesus was the most important city visited by Paul. Its position as a commercial and industrial centre had attracted to it large numbers of Jews, while its political and religious importance secured that what was taught in Ephesus should be heard throughout the whole province (Acts xix. 10). The whole narrative in the Book of Acts indicates that the Gospel was widely received both by the Jews and Greeks of Ephesus, and that the connection of Paul with the Christians there was unusually intimate.

2. *Peculiar Character of the Epistle.*—But turning to the Epistle which we know as "the Epistle to the Ephesians," we find none of the friendly salutations common in the other Epistles, none of the fond naming of this friend and that in the Church addressed, no transmission of greetings from companions of the writer. And what is even more staggering, we find Paul speaking as if it was possible that the Ephesians were not aware of the

character and contents of his preaching, or could only have become acquainted with it by report (Eph. iii. 2; iv. 21). Moreover, while in the Acts there is evidence that the Ephesian Church must have been largely composed of Jews, it is in this Epistle addressed as a Gentile Church (ii. 11, 19; iii. 1; iv. 17). But in point of fact the words of the inscription, "at Ephesus" (Eph. i. 1), are not read in our two oldest MSS., the Vatican and the Sinaitic. And there is no doubt that the early Christian writers had difficulties about the inscription. Basil tells us that the words cited were not in the oldest MSS. Origen certainly did not read them. Marcion called the Epistle, "the Epistle to the Laodiceans," and Tertullian's reply to him is unsatisfactory.

With these facts before us it is natural to suppose that as the letter left the hand of the writer it was without any particular address, and was intended to be read not only by the Church at Ephesus, but by other Churches of proconsular Asia in which he was not personally known. The letter was carried by Tychicus (Eph. vi. 21), who was also the bearer of the letter to the Colossians (Col. iv. 7), and whose commission probably extended to other Churches of the district. It is, indeed, quite possible that this "Epistle to the Ephesians" was the "Epistle from Laodicea," which the Apostle instructed the Colossians to read (Col. iv. 16). That Epistle cannot have been addressed particularly and exclusively to Laodicea, else Paul could not have sent his greetings to the members of the Laodicean Church through the Colossians as he did (Col. iv. 15). Had he been writing directly to the Laodicean Church he would certainly have sent greetings directly. The "Epistle from Laodicea" must therefore have been of a general character, such as that to the Ephesians, and there is no reason to believe it was not that letter itself.

If this is the right construction to put upon the incidental allusions found in these Epistles, then we conclude that Tychicus was entrusted with this "Epistle to the Ephesians," and was instructed to read it to the Churches he visited. These Churches of proconsular Asia had not been founded by Paul himself, and were considered by him as essentially Gentile-Christian, and are so addressed. When his letters were collected this circular letter to the Churches of Asia would naturally be inscribed with the name of the metropolis and mother church, and be subsequently known as the Epistle to the Ephesians.

3. *Its Theme and Purpose.*—The contents of the Epistle quite bear out this idea of its destination. For a circular letter no subject could be more appropriate than the unity of the Church. Unity is the key to this Epistle—the unity of the Church with God, the unity of the two great sections of the Church—the

Jewish and the Gentile; the unity of the individual members with one another in the one body of the Church Catholic. "In Christ all things, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, are gathered together in one" (i. 10). This is God's eternal purpose, hid from former ages (iii. 5), but now made known (iii. 5, 9). To reconcile all things to God—that is the purpose which through all the ages has been running on to fulfilment. It is in Christ this purpose is fulfilled, for as in the Epistle to the Colossians Paul had taught that "in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," so in this Epistle he teaches that as Christ is the fulness and as it were body of God, so is the Church "Christ's body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Union with God is not mechanical in the case of men; they are brought into true fellowship with God, being "chosen in Christ *to be holy*" (i. 4). In reconciling Jew and Gentile alike to God, Christ has reconciled them to one another, "making of twain *one* new man" (ii. 15), and giving "both access by *one* Spirit unto the Father" (ii. 18). In order to come into this true reconciliation with God, and be "filled with all the fulness of God" (iii. 19), Christ must dwell in the heart by faith till the sovereignty and dominion of His love over all things be in some measure understood (iii. 17—20). As soon as churches and members of churches recognise that "there is one body and one Spirit, even as they are called in one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith," &c. (iv. 4—6), they are ashamed of bitterness, wrangling, fraud, and feel themselves bound to promote the good of the whole body by each performing his own function.

The practical injunctions into which these doctrinal statements run are ruled by two ideas. The idea of unity excludes lying, "Speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another" (iv. 25). Anger, stealing, foul conversation are also excluded by the law that binds us to do and to say what may minister to those about us (iv. 29). The idea that the radical relationships of life are pure also plays its part. In opposition to the Gnostic asceticism, which taught that these relationships must be abandoned if men would be holy, Paul shows that in these relationships the highest Christian grace, the very love which Christ bore to men, is to be cultivated.

4. *Conjecture as to its Occasion.*—Weiss is of opinion that the Epistle had a more definite and urgent historical occasion than the mere accident of the journey of Tychicus to Colossæ. He thinks the contents of the Epistle can only be accounted for if we suppose that Paul saw in the Churches of Asia symptoms of the same dangers which had grown to such magnitude in

Galatia. "The Phrygian disturbances had again reminded the Apostle how readily the old antagonism which he had overcome in his legally-minded Pharasaic opponents might spring up again in a new form; hence it occurred to him to show that it might be got rid of by admitting the Gentiles to the possession of the salvation and the promises of free Israel, and must necessarily be dissipated on the part of the Gentiles by the laying aside of all heathen practices, and the regulation of the whole moral life in a Christian spirit, which makes all legal or ascetic restrictions superfluous." That there were Jewish Christian Churches in Asia he considers is involved in the inscription of St. Peter's First Epistle, and the many reminiscences and echoes of that Epistle which occur in the Epistle to the Ephesians are accounted for on the supposition that the same Churches were in the writer's view. It must, however, be acknowledged that in the Epistle there is little evidence even of an embryonic hostility on the part of the Jewish Christians, whatever shyness on the part of the Gentile Christians may be discerned. [Material for a comparison of the Epistle to the Ephesians with 1 Peter will be found in Weiss's "Introduction to the New Testament," i. 355.]

5. *Its Similarity to "Colossians."*—Knowing as we do that the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians were dispatched, and therefore probably written, at the same time, we are not surprised to find that many of the thoughts and many of the phrases are the same in both. The writer is evidently moving in the same circle of ideas, the cosmic significance of the person and work of Christ, the purpose of God towards the world, and the arrangement in accordance with this purpose of the ages or dispensations in history. Paul in both Epistles calls attention to the fact that he had been entrusted with the ministry by a special dispensation of God's grace, that he might make known the mystery which in former ages had been hid (Eph. iii. 1—9; cp. Coloss. i. 23—27). In both Epistles the work of Christ is spoken of as a reconciling work (Eph. ii. 13—19; Col. i. 20). In both Christ is presented as embodying and making available for man the fulness of God (Eph. i. 23; Col. i. 19), and as the head of the body the Church (Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; Col. i. 18). The condition of men apart from Christ is described in similar terms in both Epistles (Eph. ii. 5; Col. ii. 13); the results of Christ's work are also similarly described (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14), and the transition from the natural to the Christian life is in both spoken of as a "putting off the old man" and putting on the new (Eph. iv. 22—24; Col. iii. 9, 10). The graces which the "new man" exhibits, and the conduct becoming his high calling, are

spoken of in almost identical language in the closing exhortations of both Epistles, although in the Ephesian letter there is richer development of domestic duties.

6. *Date and Circumstances of Composition.*—This similarity has excited much attention, and has, in the first place, invited the question, which of the two letters was first written? From the supposed mention of the Epistle to the Ephesians in Col. iv. 16, it has been concluded by many sound critics that it was the earlier of the two. But on the other hand it is urged that the occurrence of the expression “you also,” in Eph. vi. 21, is proof that this same recommendation of Tychicus had already been made to the Colossians (cp. Col. iv. 7, 8). “In any case it is most natural to suppose that the Epistle designed for concrete needs was written first, wider and freer expression being then given by the Apostle in a letter of more general character to the thoughts by which he was stirred.” The attempts which have been made to show the dependence either of *Ephesians* on *Colossians* (Hönig) or of *Colossians* on *Ephesians* (Mayerhoff) cannot be said to have been successful. Each of the Epistles is so freely written, and contains so much independent matter, and makes so different a use of ideas that are common to both, that all we can say is that they were written at the same time and under the influence of the same dominating thoughts.

Whether written before or after the sister Epistle to the Colossians, this letter was evidently written while Paul was a prisoner (see iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20). It has usually been supposed that it was during his Roman imprisonment these letters were penned, but recently there has been a considerable reaction in favour of the Cæsarean imprisonment. Between these competing claims it is not easy to decide, but on the whole the evidence is rather in favour of the later date, the Roman imprisonment. Baur, indeed, and his disciples persuade themselves that it must have been written much later than this or any point within the lifetime of Paul. References both to Gnosticism and Montanism are found in it. The latter phase of doctrine is detected in “the prominence given to the *πνεῦμα* as the Montanist Paraclete of the gift of the Spirit, the union of Prophets with Apostles, the insistence on the holiness of the Church, and the division of its life into epochs, as well as the comparison of its relation to Christ with the marriage relation, and such like.

The proper aim of the Epistle seemed to be to bring the two parties in the Church, viz., the Jewish and Gentile Christians who were still separated, into the unity of the Catholic Church, which was attempted by an external synthesis of faith

and love, by modifying the Pauline thesis of justification, and making concessions to Judaism with its righteousness of works, and by an external union of Jews and Gentiles through the abolition of the law, *i.e.* essentially of circumcision.

7. *Authenticity*.—But considering the amount of attestation the Epistle receives from the sub-apostolic writers, it is impossible to doubt its authenticity. Clement of Rome (i. 46) seems to have it in his mind when he says, “Have we not one God, and one Christ, and one Spirit of grace poured out upon us, and one calling in Christ.” Ignatius, in his *Epistle to the Ephesians* (circa 110), mentions Paul’s Epistle to them, and imitates the introduction of the apostolic letter in his own. In chapters ix. and xv. he also makes use of the idea of a temple built of living stones as naturally suggests the similar language of Paul. Polycarp also quotes this Epistle; and it is included as Pauline in the Canons of the second century.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL, THE APOSTLE

TO THE

PHILIPPIANS.

1. *The Church at Philippi.*—Philippi was the most easterly city of Macedonia, and was therefore “the first” (Acts xvi. 12) at which Paul arrived in that province, on his first visit to Europe. It had originally been known as *Kρηνίδες* (*Fountains*); but when Philip the Great enlarged and strengthened it, he named it after himself, Philippi. In history it became conspicuous as the scene of the overthrow of Brutus and Cassius, in commemoration of which event it was erected into a colony by Augustus. Its population accordingly must have been largely composed, in New Testament times, of the descendants of Roman veterans, using the Latin language and observing the Roman law. The Jews were apparently few, as they had no synagogue but only a place of prayer on the bank of the little stream, Gangites, which flowed past the town. The idea, therefore, that the Philippian Church was the subject of a Jewish Christian schism is untenable, although both in former times, and more recently by so able a critic as Holstein, this has been maintained. (See Schinz, “*Die Christliche Gemeinde zu Philippi*,” Zurich, 1833.)

It is evident, however, from iii. 2, *seqq.*, that the Philippian Church was exposed to the same dangers as other Churches from Jewish Christian teaching, although as yet this teaching had not deeply influenced many of its members. They are not addressed in this passage as the members of the Galatian Church were addressed. They are not admonished or rebuked as having already fallen away from Pauline teaching, but are warned against teachers whose influence was anti-Pauline. Neither is this warning the main theme of the letter, nor is it the object of the Apostle's writing.

The occasion of the Epistle was the return of Epaphroditus to

Philippi. He had come to Rome as the bearer of a gift from the Apostle's friends in Philippi, and had thrown himself so sympathetically into the work of Christ in the metropolis, that he had contracted serious illness (ii. 30). On recovering and hearing how anxious his friends had been on his account, he naturally desired to return to Philippi, and Paul could not send him home without putting in his hands a written acknowledgment of the kindness he had received from the Philippians. He wished also to prepare the way for Timothy's visit (ii. 19), and to incite them to unity and joyfulness of spirit.

2. *Date and Place of Composition.*—The Epistle, then, bears on its face that it was written from Rome towards the close of Paul's imprisonment. Though still in bonds he was living in expectation of a speedy decision in his case. To himself personally it mattered little whether this decision should consign him to a martyr's death, or should set him free to face once more the toils and risks and contumely of an Apostle's life. But though on his own account he had much reason to long for emancipation from the privations and hardships of life, and for entrance into the joy of his Lord, he was quite willing to spend himself for others, and inclined to think that he was destined to be used still in Christ's cause on earth (i. 20—26). And he was reconciled not only to the termination of his imprisonment, whatever its issue might be, but he was now in a position to see how much the Gospel had been furthered by that very confinement which had threatened to obstruct his usefulness. The soldiers who guarded him could not but talk in the barracks of the Pretorian guard (i. 13) of the strange words that fell from his lips. The reality of his character and the truth of his teaching penetrated even into the household of Cæsar (iv. 22), and a gospel which might have been contemptuously ignored, had it been proclaimed in the Jewish quarter, was now the talk of Rome. Besides his pertinacity and joy in prosecuting still his Apostolic function gave new confidence to the followers of Christ in the metropolis (i. 14); and even those who grudged him his influence, were by their envy (i. 15) stirred to greater zeal in proclaiming the Gospel.

Paul tells them how his sufferings had thus tended to "the furtherance of the Gospel," that they may be encouraged to expect a similar result from their sufferings (i. 27—30). His imprisonment must not discompose them, nor are they in his absence to suffer their faith or their love to fail; but following their Lord in His humility, they are to accept a lowly place, and so work out their own salvation, depending not on the presence of an Apostle, but on a higher and stronger will (ii. 1—13). He

encourages them to this humble and joyful acceptance of their lot by telling him that he means to send Timothy to visit them, and hopes also to come himself. By this introduction he at last reaches the announcement of the return of Epaphroditus, which was the prime occasion of his writing.

3. *St. Paul's Doctrine.*—Although the object of the Epistle was not doctrinal, Paul never more clearly announced his Gospel than in the third chapter. If circumcision, Hebrew descent, legal blamelessness, formed a just claim to salvation, Paul had more to rely upon than the most convinced and zealous Judaizer. He was circumcised, of pure blood, and a rigid observer of the law. But though he once built his hope of God's favour on these things, and counted them over in his own mind as his spiritual gains, he now esteemed them not at all. He found them to be an actual hindrance, a loss, a minus quantity. He had to cast them away, to renounce all these claims, in order that he might win Christ. For a man who hopes to earn God's favour by his own righteousness has no need of Christ, and will not accept Him. But, says Paul, "I have suffered the loss of all things"—all, that is, on which he had founded the hope of God's favour—"and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him," &c. (iii. 8, 9). He saw how much purer, deeper, more efficient was the righteousness offered to him in Christ, and therefore in order to win it he rejected the other. To depend on both was impossible; they mutually exclude each other. Paul made his choice, threw away his former gains and so gained Christ. He saw that the favour of God, which he had been laboriously trying to secure by exact observance of the law, was already his by God's free gift. And he at the same time saw in the character of Christ that the righteousness of God was an absolute righteousness impossible for him to attain to by the law.

But while he abandoned his own righteousness as a ground of God's favour, he was far from abandoning the hope of holiness. On the contrary, his aim is not only to win Christ and be found in Him, but "to know Christ and the power of His resurrection," &c. (iii. 10). His final object being "to attain to the resurrection of the dead," to be conformed to Christ in spirit and in body (iii. 21), he finds in Christ new forces for the attainment of this object. He sees it attained in Christ, and this gives a definiteness and hopefulness to his aim which it had not before. And further, the intimate fellowship into which Christ has called him sustains, purifies, and strengthens him.

4. *Critical Objections.*—Schrader, who confined his criticism to the section iii. 1—iv. 9, was the first to throw doubt on the

authenticity of the Epistle. Baur conceived the Epistle to be conciliatory, and thus summarises his objections: "What appears suspicious to me in the Philippian Epistle may be reduced to the following three heads: 1. The appearance of Gnostic ideas in the passage ii. 6—9. 2. The want of anything distinctly Pauline. 3. The questionableness of some of the historical data." Schwegler, following Baur, finds an allusion to the two opposed Church parties in the two women of iv. 2, and Peter is the "yoke-fellow" appealed to by Paul. This criticism, however, has been repudiated by the more recent chiefs of the modern school, Hausrath, Holtzmann, Pfeiderer, and Hilgenfeld, who maintain the authenticity of the Epistle. Holstein has indeed reopened the question, instructively analysing the doctrine and the language of the Epistle, but his reasoning has not materially altered the attitude of criticism towards the authorship.

Readers of the Epistle will be disposed to agree with Weiss, who says, "It is in fact hard to understand how an Epistle containing so little that is properly doctrinal, and for the forging of which no object whatever can be conceived, should be spurious. The purely personal outpourings of the Apostle's heart respecting his feelings towards the Philippians, his frame of mind and prospects in captivity, would appear to be entirely at variance with such a view; especially does it seem inconceivable that a pseudonymous writer should have put into the mouth of the Apostle the expectation of being set free, although such expectation by the assumption of criticism was not actually fulfilled."

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

COLOSSIANS.

1. *The City of Colossæ.*—Colossæ, situated on the river Lycus, in south-western Phrygia, but within the Roman pro-consular province of Asia, had in earlier times been a large and populous city, but was considerably reduced at the date of this letter, possibly owing to the rivalry of its prosperous neighbours Laodicea and Hierapolis, which lay a few miles farther down the river. The only feature of the population which throws light on the Epistle is its very considerable Jewish ingredient. Two thousand Jewish families had been transplanted by Antiochus the Great, and had been settled in Lydia and Phrygia, and it is important to observe that those families had been brought from Babylonia and Mesopotamia. Other influences increased the Jewish population, until in Paul's time they formed a distinctly influential element in the towns of Phrygia.

2. *Occasion of the Epistle.*—Although the missionary journeys of Paul had more than once lain through Phrygia, it is clear that his route had always been east and north of the cities lying in the valley of the Lycus. In writing to the Colossians he classes them (ii. 1) with "those who have not seen [his] face in the flesh." Apparently they had received the Gospel through Epaphras (i. 7), who was himself a Colossian (iv. 12), and probably was one of those who heard Paul preach at Ephesus, in the school of Tyrannus, and who spread the knowledge of the Lord Jesus among "all them which dwelt in Asia" (Acts xix. 10). Epaphras had joined Paul in Rome, and had given him a vivid idea of the progress and of the dangers of the Christian Churches in the valley of the Lycus (i. 8; iv. 12, 13). Teachers had appeared in Colossæ who were confusing the minds of the converts not yet "established in the faith."

The precise doctrines and affinities of these teachers can be

gathered from the Epistle itself, in which Paul warns the Christians against them. That they were Jews is evident from their enjoining circumcision (ii. 11; iii. 11), and the observance of the Mosaic ordinances, sacred days and seasons, and so forth (ii. 14—22). So far they resembled the Judaisers who had marred Paul's work in Galatia and elsewhere. But with this Judaism the Colossian teachers mingled a "philosophy" (ii. 8), a "worshipping of angels" (ii. 18), and an ascetic "neglect of the body" (ii. 23) which were not characteristic of Judaizing teachers. It would also appear that their philosophy or theology endangered the supremacy of Christ, probably by ascribing to angels the work of creation (i. 16), of giving and enforcing the law (ii. 15), and of mediating in redemption between God and man (ii. 18). And it is plain that all this was taught as a mystery or as esoteric doctrine imparted to the initiated alone, and under seal of secrecy (ii. 3; i. 27); and the emphasis laid on the non-exclusiveness of the Gospel i. 28, in the three times repeated "every."

3. *The Colossian Heresy*.—But no sooner are these characteristics of the Colossian heresy stated than it is obvious that point by point they coincide with Gnosticism. The very terms used by Paul are Gnostic terms.* Gnosticism, as the name itself implies, asserted the supremacy of knowledge (*gnosis*). Faith may suffice for the multitude, but the initiated, the select few, are saved by knowledge. The esoteric doctrine they imparted was a doctrine of creation devised to save God from the responsibility of being the author of evil. God, who is absolutely good, cannot by His immediate act have produced the world, for had He done so, it also must, like its author, be only good. Besides this moral difficulty there was ever clamouring for solution the metaphysical difficulty of connecting the Absolute God with the material world.

Both these difficulties the Gnostics claimed to solve by their theory of emanations. God expressed Himself by giving birth to a being worthy of Him; and that being again reproduced a third, and so on through successive emanations, each naturally in proportion to its distance from the source having a feebler divine ingredient, until contact with matter and the work of creation become possible. Between the supreme perfect God and the world there is thus interposed a graduated series of beings, which appear sometimes as personal, sometimes as impersonal, in the various Gnostic systems, and which are variously known as emanations, æons, or angels. Underlying this whole theory is the Oriental dualism which ascribes the origin of evil, not to the

* "Pleroma," ii. 9; "Principalities and Powers," &c., i. 6.

will of man but to matter. And as a necessary result of this tenet the Gnostics taught that redemption is to be achieved by asceticism.

4. *A Phase of Gnosticism.*—The form which Gnosticism took when combined with Jewish Christianity is distinctly seen in the teaching of Cerinthus, who flourished in the time of Trajan. He was a Jewish Christian, who adopted Gnostic views, and taught that the world was not made by the Supreme God, but by a power distinct from Him and ignorant of Him. Jesus, who was a mere man, received at His baptism the Christ, by whose inspiration He announced the unknown Father, the Supreme God. Toward the end of His ministry the Christ departed from Him, so that the mere man Jesus suffered, died, and rose again. This teaching brings out clearly the Ebionite tendency which naturally resulted from the Gnostic horror of matter; and that some similar tendency was exhibited by the Colossian errorists is evident from the emphatic manner in which Paul (i. 14, 19, 20, 22, &c.) links together the supremacy of Christ and His death, insisting that the same person who made all things suffered on the cross.

5. *Historical Objections to Genuineness.*—But the emergence of Gnostic ideas and terminology in a letter purporting to be written in the year 64 A.D., is declared to be sufficient proof that it is not what it claims to be. Thus Baur affirms that “we are here transported to a circle of ideas which belongs to a wholly different historical period, viz., to the period of Gnosticism,” that is, to the second century. It is true that, before the time of Cerinthus, we have no trustworthy record of any sect or teacher who combined fully-developed Gnostic ideas with Christian doctrine. But to argue that Gnosticism was not known in the Church until the beginning of the second century, and that this Epistle must therefore be referred to that period, is either to throw dust in the eyes or to betray ignorance of history. For the roots from which Gnosticism sprang can be traced not merely into the first century, but through the writings of Philo, the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, back to the Persian speculations with which the Jews became familiar during the Captivity. And there is as much reason to refer Philo to the second century as to refer this Epistle to the period of fully-developed and explicitly-enounced Gnosticism.

The fact is that, long before the Christian Church was founded, the thinkers of Asia were familiar with the ideas and speculations which were afterwards identified with Gnosticism; and if this great system was not earlier recognised as a Christian heresy, the probability is that the delay was caused, not by any lack of endeavour to combine Christianity and Gnosticism, but by the

strenuous opposition which the Apostles offered to the incipient tendencies towards this combination. It would be strange, indeed, if in an age when East and West were mingling, when amalgamations and combinations of every kind were attempted, when men seem to have come to distrust each separate philosophy, and to imagine that truth might be found by combining all, no attempt had been made to combine Christianity and Gnostic speculations. This Epistle is the most trustworthy evidence we have of any actual attempt of this kind, and in these Colossian teachers we see the spiritual progenitors of Cerinthus and the rest.

6. *Historical Place of the Colossian Heresy.*—Bishop Lightfoot has materially aided the endeavour to posit this Colossian heresy in its proper historical place by showing that it has its natural precursor in a well-known form of Judaism, which existed in the time of our Lord and His Apostles. He has shown that Essenism was Gnostic Judaism, and that this type of Jewish thought had established itself in Phrygia and Asia in the Apostolic Age. The Essenes represented, among the Jews, legalism, mysticism, and asceticism. They were scrupulous in their observance of the Mosaic law, though they looked with horror on bloody sacrifices; abstained, as it would seem, from eating flesh and drinking wine, and discountenanced marriage. It is easy to recognise the principle which lay at the root of this asceticism—the principle that matter is evil, and that to be delivered from sin man must, as far as possible, be emancipated from all dependence on matter. They betrayed their genealogical connection with Persian speculation by their worship of the sun and their doctrine of angels.

What that doctrine precisely was it is impossible to say, for the initiated was sworn “to conceal nothing from the members of the sect, and to report nothing concerning them to others . . . not to communicate any of their doctrines to any one otherwise than as he himself had received them . . . and to guard carefully the names of the angels.” The Essenes would thus seem to have possessed three of the characteristic notes of Gnosticism: “This Jewish sect exhibits the same exclusiveness in the communication of its doctrines. Its theological speculations take the same direction, dwelling on the mysteries of creation, regarding matter as the abode of evil, and postulating certain intermediate spiritual agencies as necessary links of communication between heaven and earth. And, lastly, its speculative opinions involve the same ethical conclusions, and lead in like manner to a rigid asceticism.” If, then, Essenism came in contact with Christianity and sought to form an alliance with it, there would result a conglomerate distinguishable by the very features of this Colossian heresy.

7. *Attitude of the Apostle.*—By these explanations not only is the genuineness of the Epistle established, but the point and power of its statements are brought clearly out. Paul does not aim at exploding the incipient heresy by argument. He contents himself with showing that all that was advantageous or attractive in the new doctrine existed already in Christ, and existed in Him, not in appearance, but in truth. To the attractiveness of being initiated into mysteries and esoteric doctrines to which none but the select few were admitted, he opposes his ministry of a Gospel free from all intellectual exclusiveness, which he preaches to "every creature" (i. 23), "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (i. 28). The mere statement of this true perfecting of every man by the revelation of the mystery of Christ should be enough to make every sound-hearted man ashamed of being led away by a promised "perfection," accomplished in a few by initiation into mysterious speculative theories. Similarly, over against the theory of intermediate beings saving God from direct contact with matter, Paul enunciates the true deity of Christ, and affirms that "by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth," and that so far from matter being evil "all things were created . . . for Him" (i. 16).

No language could more firmly and explicitly affirm the proper divinity of Christ, or dispel the growing tendency to an Ebionitism, which might seem to save the Divine from coming into ignominious contact with matter, and even with death. The Christ whom Paul preached was not one emanation to be found at some point of the graduated descent from God to the last developed æon, but was Himself divine; "it pleased the Father that in Him should all the *pleroma* dwell," the totality, or fulness of the Godhead, so that in Him all Divine attributes were to be found (i. 19; ii. 9). There was, therefore, no need of any wisdom or help which could not be found in Christ (ii. 3, 10). To worship angels and seek their help (ii. 18) may seem humility, but it is gratuitous and futile, for "ye are complete in Christ, who is the head of all principality and power" (ii. 10). Hold the head and you are saved; and refrain from all speculations which merely puff you up with a sense of fancied superiority (ii. 18).

The practical results of this incipient Gnosticism are exposed in the same manner, by exhibiting in contrast the greater efficacy of the purely Christian teaching. The rules of an ascetic avoidance of material things, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," have a show of humility, but "are of no value against the indul-

gence of the flesh" (ii. 23). The true deliverance from carnality and earthliness is to be found in fellowship with Christ, in so truly believing and in loving Him that our affections are carried with Him to things above (iii. 1—5).

8. *Authenticity*.—The authenticity of the Epistle is externally attested by echoes in Barnabas, Clement, and Ignatius; by quotations in Justin Martyr, and by its reception into the canons of the first century. Mayerhoff was the first to throw suspicion upon it by exhibiting its resemblances to the Epistle to the Ephesians. Renan argues strongly for its genuineness; and among other grounds urges that if Ephesians was an imitation of it this implies that the imitator accepted Colossians as Pauline. Hilgenfeld holds with Baur, that "the Colossian letter has to do with an already fully developed Gnosticism, and this carries us not merely beyond Paul's lifetime, but beyond the first century." It is, however, impossible to imagine a letter such as this to have been written in presence of the fully developed systems. Opposition to these systems would have been more detailed and pronounced.

The difficulties which have been found in the style of the letter are explained by Paul's want of familiarity with this novel teaching. He was on ground he had not traversed before, using the suggestions of heresy to elucidate new aspects of Christ and His Gospel. The easy and natural manner in which this letter links itself to the Epistle to Philemon (cp. iv. 9—14, with Phil. 23, 24; iv. 17, with Phil. 2) is, as Renan shows, strong proof of authenticity. It may be added that the descriptions given of those who send salutations correspond with the fact that Paul and his constant companions had not been at Colossæ. Baur's idea, that Luke and Mark are brought together with "reconciling" intention is too ridiculous.

The mention of "the Epistle from Laodicea" (iv. 16) has given rise to a number of theories, which are classified and examined by Lightfoot. His own opinion is that the Epistle here referred to was that to the Ephesians, which was intended as a circular letter, to be read first by the Ephesians, then by the Laodiceans, and then by the Colossians. The spurious Laodicean Epistle is given by Lightfoot. It is a mere cento of phrases and clauses from the Pauline letters, and is entirely worthless.

FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

1. *Thessalonica*.—At the date of Paul's visit to Thessalonica, it was a city of some importance both commercially and politically. Lying, as it does, at the head of the Thermaic gulf, with the open sea in front and a rich country behind, it could scarcely fail to become a prosperous seat of commerce, and as it was also very capable of defence, Cassander rebuilt and enlarged it, and gave it the name of his wife Thessalonica, a sister of Alexander the Great. When it passed into the hands of the Romans its importance was still recognised, and it became the chief city of Macedonia Secunda, and ultimately the metropolis of the whole of that province. At the time of Paul's visit it was in the enjoyment of the rights of a free city, electing its own politarchs, although subject to the Roman proconsul.

Thessalonica was therefore a city in which the Apostle might expect to find a centre from which the Gospel might be disseminated both inland and seaward. Besides, unlike Philippi, it contained a synagogue to which his Jewish birth would give him entrance, and in which his message would at least be listened to with intelligence. It happened also that his own trade, the manufacture and preparation of goat's-hair cloth, was one of the staples of Thessalonica, as it still is of its modern representative Saloniki. For three Sabbaths Paul was allowed to address the Jews in the Synagogue (Acts xvii. 2), with the result that some believed, while a large number of "the devout Greeks and of the chief women" also accepted his teaching. The unbelieving Jews, however, here as elsewhere, compassed the dismissal of Paul from the city.

2. *Date of the First Epistle*.—The order of events from the compulsory departure of the Apostle from Thessalonica to the date of the First Epistle to the Church there, is clearly described

in the Book of Acts (chaps. xvii. and xviii.). From that source we learn that after leaving Thessalonica with his companions, Silas and Timothy, St. Paul proceeded to Berea and thence to Athens. Whether Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica from Berea, or from some other point, does not appear; but it is certain that when St. Paul found it impossible to return himself (1 Thess. ii, 17, 18), he dispatched Timothy to encourage and establish the young converts in that place. Meanwhile the Apostle went on from Athens to Corinth, and there Silas and Timothy coming from Macedonia overtook him (Acts xviii. 5).

It was the tidings which Timothy brought which prompted the letter (1 Thess. iii. 6). The Epistle therefore would seem to have been written two or three months after the Apostle's visit, and most probably in the early part of the year 53 A.D. Between his visit and his letter, time must be given for the occurrence of such events as he alluded to in the letter, the death of some at least of the Thessalonian Christians (iv. 13), and the fame which their faith had attained not only in their own neighbourhood but in more remote localities (i. 8). But for these events two or three months is quite sufficient. The Epistle is therefore the earliest extant Epistle of St. Paul.

3. *The Occasion of Writing.*—As Timothy's arrival in Corinth enables us to fix the date of the Epistle, so must we find the occasion of it in the tidings brought by that messenger. The report was in the main favourable. Though suffering some persecution, the faith of the young converts was firm, their love for one another was still apparent, and their affection for St. Paul himself unabated (iii. 6). At the same time Timothy had not concealed their shortcomings, but had reported that some Greek vice still adhered to the new Christians (iv. 1—8); and also that the motives of the Apostle in bringing the Gospel to them had been called in question. Paul felt it necessary both for his own and for the Gospel's sake to defend his character from these accusations. There were also one or two irregularities appearing in the little Christian community which it was advisable to check. The persecution to which the Christians were subjected, though it did not avail to destroy their faith, made them more ready to listen to highly coloured pictures of the kingdom and coming of Christ. And such was the excited expectancy which the idea of the speedy return of Christ produced that some of them gave up their secular employment and became dependent idlers (iv. 11; v. 14). Others again were disturbed in their minds because they feared that their friends who died before the coming of Christ might miss the glory and joy of that event.

There was quite enough then in the condition of this young

Church to elicit a letter of counsel and encouragement from its founder. Baur, indeed, says that "the insignificance of its contents, the want of any special aim, and of any intelligible occasion or purpose, is itself a criterion adverse to a Pauline origin." But manifestly there was occasion; and had there been no disorders in the Church which needed correction, and no slanderers whom it was expedient to gag, yet the mere affection of the Apostle for those who were suffering for the truth might well have prompted a friendly letter. Besides, the objection that there is no important teaching in the letter cuts two ways; for, as Jowett observes, "if it were admitted that the absence of doctrinal ideas makes the Epistle unworthy of St Paul, it makes it also a forgery without an object."

4. *Evidence of Authenticity.*—But so obviously and flagrantly arbitrary is Baur's criticism of this Epistle, that the mass of those who usually follow him here part company, and accept this as a genuine production of St. Paul's. The external attestation to its authenticity is complete. The internal evidence is also strong. In no letter do Paul's emotional characteristics more conspicuously appear: his warm and eager acknowledgment of any good that could be seen in his converts, his anxiety for their welfare, his sympathy with their distresses, his desire to revisit them, his frank and humble egotism, the delicacy with which he alludes to shortcomings. In the words of Bishop Lightfoot, "The fineness and delicacy of touch with which the Apostle's relations toward his Thessalonian converts are drawn—his yearning to see them, his anxiety in the absence of Timothy, and his heartfelt rejoicing at the good news—are quite beyond the reach of the clumsy forgeries of the early Church. In the second place the writer uses language which, however it may be explained, is certainly coloured by the anticipation of the speedy advent of the Lord—language natural enough in the Apostle's own lips, but quite inconceivable in a forgery after his death, when time had disappointed these anticipations, and when the revival or mention of them would serve no purpose, and might seem to discredit the Apostle. Such a position would be an anachronism in a writer of the second century."

5. *Survey of Contents.*—In the first three chapters of the Epistle the writer's object is to encourage his Thessalonian converts, and to cleanse their minds of every idea which might obstruct or retard their perseverance. It begins by assuring them that their faith and its fruit hitherto have been matter of constant gratitude to God on his part (i. 1—3); and that they may be stimulated to surpass previous efforts he reminds them that their faith had manifestly been God's work, and that their election

had been proved by their being made an exemplary instance of God's power in converting idolaters and bringing them to the true God (i. 4—10). The two conspicuous features of his visit to Thessalonica had been those which he mentions in i. 9, the power which had characterized his own preaching, and the unusually striking effects of it.

In the second chapter he first expatiates on the former, and then on the latter of these features. In ii. 1—12 he repels the calumnies and insinuations which had been set in circulation about his interested motives, and appeals to the Thessalonians themselves as witnesses of his blameless life, his freedom from avarice and indolence, and his confidence in the value of the message he delivered to them. In the paragraph ii. 13—16, he appeals to their steadfastness under persecution in proof that his Gospel was the word of God; and, therefore, by implication, that he was God's commissioned servant. In ii. 17—iii. 13, he continues to defend himself, but now against the aspersion of cowardice and fickleness which were supposed to be shown in his sudden abandonment of Thessalonica, leaving his converts to fight their own battle. To this he replies that he had striven to return, that although absent in body he was with them in spirit, and lived by their prosperity and progress; and he further reminds them how he had been content to remain alone in a strange and hostile city that he might send his companion to aid them and bring news of them.

This forms the true body of the Epistle, and the rest is supplementary, as is shown by the connecting phrase "Furthermore," or, as the Revised Version more accurately has it, "Finally, then." In this supplement the Apostle admonishes his readers to hold fast to the commandments of the Lord which he had made known to them, and especially to beware of unchastity, little as it might be thought of among their heathen friends (iv. 1—8). Of brotherly love he would not have spoken had not some manifestations of their spirit endangered that love; he exhorts them, therefore, to increase in love, and to study to be quiet, and to earn their own bread (iv. 9—12). And as it was the expectation of the Lord's coming which had led some to give up their ordinary employments, so the same expectation had led them to curious and unwise questionings regarding the fate of those who die before that event, and regarding the time at which it is to be expected. These questionings St. Paul deprecates. Those who die before the Lord's coming are at no disadvantage, and the precise time no one can tell; the children of light will not be taken unawares (iv. 13; v. 11). The Epistle then passes into a series of admonitions, not as a river loses itself in a marsh,

for these admonitions are not abstract and random, but are directed pointedly at the actual conditions and needs of the Thessalonians, and it concludes with the injunction that it be publicly read.

6. *The Question of Pauline Doctrine.*—There is then in this Epistle little affirmation of what is known as specially Pauline doctrine. "Of the inability of the natural man to work out his own salvation, of the seat of sin in the flesh, of justification by grace, or of community of life with Christ mediated by His Spirit, of the position of the Christian as regards the law, or of the Apostle's profound reflections on the relation of Christianity to Judaism and heathenism, we have not a word." From this fact it is commonly inferred that at the date of this Epistle the theology of St. Paul had not attained that complete development which it afterwards reached. That may be so, but the proof of it can scarcely be found in this Epistle, in which he was addressing a Church whose difficulties were practical and personal rather than doctrinal. The constantly recurring theme of the Epistle is the Coming of the Lord (i. 10; ii. 19; iii. 13; v. 23).

The Church at Thessalonica was largely composed of Gentiles, and to Gentiles, as we see from the Apostle's speech at Athens, appeal could most effectually be made through conscience. St. Paul set before the Gentiles Jesus as the Lord appointed by God to judge the world in righteousness; and hence in this brief Epistle it is mainly this aspect of the gospel he alluded to. "There are many reasons why the subject of the second advent should occupy a larger space in the earliest stage of the Apostolical teaching than afterwards. It was closely bound up with the fundamental fact of the gospel, the resurrection of Christ, and thus it formed a natural starting point of Christian doctrine. It afforded the true satisfaction to those Messianic hopes which had drawn the Jewish converts to the fold of Christ. It was the best consolation and support of the infant Church under persecution, which must have been most keenly felt in the first abandonment of worldly pleasures and interests; more especially, as telling of a righteous Judge who would not overlook iniquity, it was essential to that call to repentance which must everywhere precede the direct and positive teaching of the gospel" (Bishop Lightfoot).

7. *The Second Epistle.*—The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was evoked by a misunderstanding of some expressions used in the First, and was probably written a few months after it, and certainly while Paul, Silas, and Timothy were still together at Corinth. These brethren are included with the Apostle in the inscription of the Epistle. The allusion in c. iii. 1, 2, to opposition

which was being made to their work agrees very well with the account given in Acts xviii. 12, of the disturbances in Corinth which resulted in the appeal to the Proconsul. Grotius, indeed, maintained that this so-called Second Epistle was in reality the First, and in this idea he is followed by Ewald, Renan, and other critics; but there is really no plausibility in such a supposition.

The Second Epistle not only presupposes, but expressly refers to the First (ii. 15). In the First the allusions to St. Paul's recent work in Thessalonica are, as was natural, abundant and vivid; in the Second such allusions are rare. The Parousia, which is spoken of as imminent in the First Epistle, is in the Second more guardedly, though more definitely, explained. The hostility of the Jews, which at the date of the earlier Epistle had begun to make itself felt, has at the date of the Second become formidable.

8. *The Object of the Writer.*—The object of this Epistle was to remove some misunderstandings of what Paul had said in his previous letter regarding the coming of the Lord. The Thessalonians had received the impression that "the day of Christ was at hand" (ii. 2), and in consequence they had on the one hand been perplexed to find that the months went by without any fulfilment of this expectation, and on the other hand they were led into idle and disorderly conduct. That they were still exposed to persecution, and found no relief from the manifestation of the Lord, St. Paul assures them is only a more certain proof that a manifestation for the judgment of their enemies and for their deliverance will one day take place (i. 4—12). And as they are not to be disturbed by their continued suffering, so neither are they to be disturbed by the non-intervention of the Lord's judgment, as if this had been definitely predicted as speedily to take place. For much must first take place; lawlessness must come to a head in a person before the personal coming of Christ destroys it (ii. 1—12). They themselves were chosen to salvation, which they should attain by holding fast what he had taught them (ii. 13—17). After asking their prayers he concludes by giving them stringent instructions regarding such members of their Church as walked disorderly, being carried away by the expectation of the Second Coming.

9. *Authenticity.*—The authenticity of this Epistle has frequently been called in question. Weiss says that "the rejection of the Second Epistle has become almost as universal in the modern critical school as the recognition of the First." This rejection bases itself on two grounds. It is thought that the view taken of the Parousia in the one Epistle disagrees with that taken in the other. The First Epistle speaks of it as imminent; the Second

as not immediate. But on more careful examination of the First Epistle it is found that it is rather the suddenness than the immediacy of the Parousia that is urged, and that St. Paul explicitly declines to say anything of the times and seasons.

The other ground of rejection is found in the apocalyptic language of the second chapter. It is maintained that the eschatology of this chapter is not the eschatology of Paul, but is borrowed from the book of Revelation. The man of sin is supposed to be Nero, of whom it was believed that he had not died, but was hidden in the East, and was destined to return. The "withholder" is Vespasian; and the Epistle must therefore have been written about the year 68 or 70 A.D. Certainly if this be the true interpretation of the passage it cannot have been written by Paul.

But the actual circumstances in which Paul was placed, as described in the Book of Acts, give us the key to the true interpretation of the passage. It was from the Jews the chief danger to the young Christian Church was to be apprehended. It was by the Jews the Apostle himself had everywhere been counterworked and assailed; and it was by them, also, that the Thessalonians had been persecuted. The Jewish hostility to the Gospel was, however, held in check by the Roman magistracy; and wherever St. Paul went he had new proof that, without the protection accorded to him and to his converts by imperial authority and justice, the Christian Church would be crushed in its infancy. This Jewish anatocism Paul believed was to culminate in an Antichrist, a false Messiah, necessarily a Jew, who should head the anti-Christian movement, and only be defeated by the appearance of Christ Himself. These expectations were derived from the eschatological discourses of the Lord Himself; and the expressions and phraseology in which they were embodied find their roots in these discourses and in the Book of Daniel. It is quite true that such ideas seem incongruous in Paul's writings, for in general he has little to say of such subjects; but compelled, as he in this instance was, to allude to the future of Judaism and Christianity, there is nothing in what he says which indicates later date or ideas which contradict his known opinions.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY AND TITUS.

1. *Authorship.*—When any book arrests our attention, we begin to feel an interest in the author. What manner of man, we ask, was he who put down those words which seem to live and which have such power to move our hearts? This is a natural question; and with the answer to it comes renewed interest in the book. As we know something of the writer, the significance of his words and phrases is found to deepen and widen. Our attention becomes more sympathetic. We hear as it were a human voice behind the words. The writer has been brought nearer to us; and our hearts kindle with the consciousness of personal friendliness.

But it should be remembered that the value of the book was established in our minds before our curiosity concerning its authorship was awakened. We may indeed read a book which was written by a friend, and we may be tempted to give it a fictitious value because of our friendship; but the great works of the world have not been treated thus. They have made their way in the world without the support of patronage or the partiality of friendship. They were their own patrons: their value to the minds and souls of men is in one sense wholly apart from their authorship. We are not interested in the book because of its author: we are interested in the author because of the book.

We have only to recall the books which have made good their hold upon humanity to feel the truth of this statement. The "Imitation of Christ" has had a circulation beyond all other books, except the Bible. The question of the authorship can hardly be considered as absolutely answered. The force of the book awakens the interest in the writer. The "Iliad," by its own colossal worth, claimed a world-wide fame, and thus called forth the contest between the cities which claimed the honour of

being the author's birthplace. The Bible itself gives illustrations of this principle. Ecclesiastes and Job stir our interest and curiosity to know something of their writers; but their true value remains whether the question of authorship can be answered or not.

We turn to these Pastoral Epistles. They have a value apart from their authorship. Doubtless there are reasons why the question of authorship must impart special significance and importance to these letters; but it is a mistake to treat them as though they had not a value independent of the writer. We need only open the Epistles and read to convince ourselves of their value.

The end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned (1 Tim. i. 5).

Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners (1 Tim. i. 15).

Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5).

God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and discipline (2 Tim. i. 7).

Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness (2 Tim. ii. 19).

When the kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward man appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy, He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost which He poured upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Lord (Titus iii. 4—6).

Words such as these carry a message to the heart and the conscience. We do not need to ask who wrote them. Their message is for us. The truths they embody are independent of author or of age. They live on the pages of these Epistles for the eternal help of humankind. They are messages from Heaven to earth. The human hand that wrote them down was, we think, St. Paul's, but, even were it another's, the messages would remain, and they would speak with abiding force to the hearts of the sons of men. "The religious consciousness which was quickened by the words of prophets and apostles in turn ratified their writings."

The profit which we may gain from the study of these letters is not wholly lost by reason of any doubts thrown upon their authorship.

But our interest may be lessened and the range of their authoritativeness diminished. It is, therefore, our duty next to enquire somewhat about the writer.

2. *Could St. Paul have written these Epistles?*—Here first a question arises which we may call the biographical problem. It has been said that, on biographical grounds, it is impossible that St. Paul could have written these letters. It may be conceded that the question has its difficulties. The arguments on both sides may be likened to two threads, both of which are slight, but their relative strength is best tested when it is asked which of them can the better bear the strain put upon them.

The opponents of the Epistles ground their opinions on the difficulty of finding a place and time for the writing of these Epistles in the life of St. Paul. This difficulty depends upon another question. Was St. Paul released after his captivity recorded in the Acts? If he was **not** released, he did not write these Epistles; for, in these Epistles, he speaks of journeys which can only have been taken after such a release. The record in the Acts of the Apostles cannot be considered complete as far as it goes. It leaves no room for a journey to Crete, for instance.

St. Paul's release is a fact which is necessary, therefore, if we are to accept these Epistles as genuine. Now the Acts of the Apostles leaves us in doubt. The last scene with which it presents us is that of St. Paul in his hired house under the surveillance of the soldier who guarded him. We are told that this state of things lasted two years. Are we at liberty, when the book ends with such a description of the Apostle's position, to make any conjectures or to draw any inferences?

We are, I think, at liberty to infer that at the close of the two years some change in the Apostle's position occurred. Now, only two conjectures concerning the nature of such a change are (as far as I can see) admissible. His position was changed either for the better or for the worse. The better could only be release; the worse could only be the severer custody followed sooner or later by martyrdom. It is hard to believe that, if the latter had been the case, the writer of the Acts would not have said so. Of course, circumstances might have made it impossible; but yet there is a probability that, having been able to record the two years' imprisonment, he had the opportunity of adding the very few words which would tell of the great Apostle's final trial and martyr-triumph.

But he added nothing. Does his silence imply that the Apostle's condition was bettered when the two years were accomplished? The only bettering was release. But if the imprisonment ended in release, all the Apostle's friends knew of it, for

he was among them ; and this being the case, there was no call upon St. Luke to add a word more.

The matter, therefore, stands thus :—If he had opportunity of adding more, and yet was content to leave his narrative incomplete, his silence is explicable only on the assumption of a release. On the other hand it is only on the assumption that the writer had no opportunity of adding a word that we can explain his silence, supposing the Apostle passed from imprisonment to death.

Hence in proportion to the probability that the writer had the chance of writing more, is the probability of the Apostle's release. If death cut the writer's life short—if such circumstances occurred which made writing impossible, then these two chances of a release or of worsened lot remain where they were—unknown, and, so far, equal chances. But if the writer was free to write, and did not write more, it can only have been because it was needless, seeing that the Apostle had been restored to the Churches of God, which he had founded and fostered.

At this point the general impression and opinion of early times may legitimately help us. The Acts of the Apostles does not negative this theory of a release. It leaves the door open to a faint supposition in favour of the theory ; and we find, as a fact, there were in early times those who believed that such a release took place. The balance, therefore, moved perhaps by small weights, drops with some decisiveness in the direction of the release theory. Again, the very existence of these Pastoral Epistles (whether written by St. Paul or not) is in favour of the theory ; no writer would have written letters in the name of the Apostle, and connected them with a time when the Apostle was known to be dead.

On the whole, then, it seems fair to say that the probability is that the Apostle was released, and that there was a period of his life in which he could have written these Pastoral Epistles.

3. *External Evidence of Authorship.*—A few words must be said respecting the external evidence. The external authority is strong, and it is unquestionably in favour of their genuineness.

It is believed that in early times they were rejected by some heterodox teachers—such, for instance, as Basilides ; but whatever importance might attach to this fact (if it be a fact) is neutralized when we learn that the rejection of these letters was not due to any literary or critical evidence against them, but to doctrinal prejudice.

Dean Alford wrote :—“There never was the slightest doubt in the ancient Church that the Epistles to Timothy and Titus were canonical, and written by St. Paul.” All external authority confirms this statement. We have not space for individual

quotations, but the following will illustrate the general position.

Irenæus quotes from these Epistles, and quotes them as the Apostle's, using the phrase—"As the Apostle says," or, "As Paul commands." Clement of Alexandria quotes these Epistles frequently: he recognises them as St. Paul's, and explains that Basilides rejected them on doctrinal grounds. Tertullian's evidence is in the same direction. The Peshito-Syriac Version contains the Epistles, and they are recognised in the Mercatorian Fragment. In addition to these witnesses, phrases and words occur in Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Hegesippus, Athenagoras, which imply an acquaintance with these Epistles.

One illustration of the evidential value of this early acquaintance with these Epistles may be of interest. In the Epistle which Clement addressed in the name of the Roman Christians to the Corinthian Church, three names are mentioned (Ep. ad Cor.), Claudius Ephebus, Valerius Bito, and Fortunatus. These men are described as "faithful and prudent men who have walked among us from youth unto old age unblameably." Men who have reached "old age" must be able to carry back their memories over thirty or forty years at least. The date of the Epistle in which they are mentioned is A.D. 95. Their recollection must have reached back to the imprisonment of St. Paul. St. Paul must have been a venerable memory to such men. Whatever writings of his remained would be cherished: forged writings claiming his name would hardly escape denunciation, especially if they dealt largely with names of those who must have been personally known to these Roman Christians. In any case, a forged or doubtful letter of the great Apostle would hardly be used, or its phrases used with approval.

But in this very letter to the Corinthian Church, which was carried to Corinth by men who must have known St. Paul, allusions to the Pastoral Epistles are found. We can hear the echoes of familiar phrases. We hear of the "lifting up of holy hands," of walking in "witness of Spirit" (cf. 1 Tim. ii. 8), and we are reminded that our Lord and Master is "King of the Ages" (cf. 1 Tim. i. 17). It is difficult not to feel that these expressions came naturally to the writer, and are used as phrases which reverent affection delights to employ. Of course it is quite conceivable that such words carry memories of St. Paul's teaching while he was at Rome. They may have been heard from his lips by the Roman Christians, and so they may have been familiar to them not through the Pastoral Epistles, but through his ministry among them. But the occurrence of such familiar phrases, taken in conjunction with the undoubted opinion of the

earliest times, must be allowed as a factor in the problem, and its value must be counted on the side of the Pauline authorship of the Epistles. Thus as far as external authority is concerned, the matter stands thus: These Epistles were known in very early times, and early accepted as St. Paul's.

4. *Internal Evidence of Authorship.*—The internal evidence must be considered. The language is said to be unlike that of St. Paul's other writings. There are in the First Epistle to Timothy no less than seventy-four words not used elsewhere. The Second Epistle has forty-six such words, and that to Titus forty-eight. This means that the peculiar words bear a proportion of about 4 to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the number of words used. It would be an interesting enquiry to search out the percentage of peculiar words used in the various works of other writers. Personally I somewhat distrust these arithmetical calculations respecting literary subjects. A man's vocabulary, no doubt, is limited, but in no work is he likely to exhaust his whole vocabulary. He may be described as a ship at anchor or as an animal tethered, and the area in which the ship can float at anchor, or over which the animal can graze, will represent his vocabulary; but neither does the ship float always on the same side of its anchor, nor does the animal feed over the same grass. The one swings with the tide, the other varies his pasture; and writers draw from one storehouse of their vocabulary at one time and unlock another storehouse at another time.

Further the analogy is not wholly true, for the ship cannot stretch its cable nor the animal its rope, but man can enlarge the range of his vocabulary; and this is especially the case with men whose lives are spent in travelling and in frequent converse with men of different classes, occupations, and nationalities. At each stage of his journey he picks up new words or rehabilitates old ones. From the sailors he will gather nautical phrases; from the shopmen the language of commerce, from the lawyer the judicial phrases. More than this, his varying experiences will suggest new illustrations of his favourite thoughts, and these in their turn will generate new phrases or special forms of expression. To a man of active mind and observing habits, life is a perpetual enrichment of his vocabulary. And none will deny the varied experience, the mental vigour, the penetrating powers of observation of St. Paul.

He had a pliancy of disposition which was a kind of genius in its way. In the time of the shipwreck, he steps into a position of almost supremacy; he has won the confidence of the sailors, and he has established himself in the favour of the centurion. Do we not feel that the Apostle who wrought with the men of his

craft as a tent-maker, was just the kind of man who would mingle as freely as he could among the crew of his ship, and while seeking the good of the men, glean up many a sailor's phrase, and gain a sympathetic knowledge of his companions' work? To such a man every journey would mean enlargement of knowledge and enrichment of language. And the statistics of his language bear this out. It is not in the Pastoral Epistles alone that we find this exuberance of language and the use of peculiar words. In the Epistle to the Romans there are one hundred and eleven peculiar words; one hundred and eighty-six in 1 and 2 Corinthians; fifty-seven in Galatians, and fifty-four in Philippians.

With these figures before us, and bearing in mind the activity and versatility of the Apostle's mind, the objections raised on the ground of language become, to say the least, of doubtful value.

5. *Alleged Doctrinal Discrepancies.*—It is further urged that the theological position in these Epistles differs from that taken up in those letters which are the undoubted works of St. Paul. "Faith, which in Paul's view had been the subjective act of the surrender of the heart to Christ, acquires now a completely objective, dogmatic significance; it is sometimes soundness of belief, or submission to the form of teaching sanctioned by the Church; at others it is really identified with that teaching and so becomes thus doctrinal belief (*fides quæ creditur*), which already begins to be definitely fixed in formula as a *regula fidei*, after the manner of creeds. . . . Faith consists simply in a dogmatic assent to the doctrine of the Church: it can no longer of itself bring justification, but requires to be supplemented by love and other virtues; further, though at first the meritoriousness of good works is denied, they acquire even greater significance and value, so that the First Epistle to Timothy is able to see in them a great foundation and degree of salvation."

On this we may remark that the scientific aspect (if we may use the phrase) of Christianity and its administrative order would be naturally given a prominence in those Epistles which are addressed to an official of the Church. A man necessarily varies the tone of his language, and of the order of his thoughts as he addresses different classes. But, further, even allowing for this, I think that the passage which I have quoted gives a somewhat harsh view of the position adopted in the Pastoral Epistles. Take the single word faith. This, it is said, has in the Pastoral Epistles lost its subjective meaning, and has found a dogmatic one. It is *fides quæ creditur*. It is true that the word faith is used in these Epistles in this sense, but not in all the passages which are cited in support of the theory advanced. If

we admit that the writer speaks of *the* faith, we find that he is also earnest in speaking of faith in the hearts of the people.

Reference is made by Pfleiderer to ten passages—1 Tim. i. 4, 5, 19; ii. 7; iii. 9; iv. 1, 6; vi. 10, 21; Tit. i. 4. It will not be lost time to touch upon them. Of these ten passages, three certainly are used without any such necessary dogmatic significance, and two appear to me to be at least doubtful. The remaining five suggest the thought of the symbolism of faith—the creed. But if this be the state of the case, where is the ground for saying that the old subjective use of the word has disappeared and that intellectual assent has taken the place of a faith which is the grasp of the heart? It was perfectly natural that the grasp of the heart upon the Lord who redeemed it should define and describe itself, and that faith should find expression in *the faith*; but neither is *the faith* a new element found first in these Epistles, and not discoverable elsewhere in St. Paul's writings, nor has the old subjective and personal sense of the word been forgotten or left out of sight here.

Further, it must not be overlooked that there is in these Epistles a spirit of tolerance and the sagacity which recognizes changed conditions. It is not fair to represent these letters as though they were the sapless directions of a man who had lost the warmth and moisture of life, and was content with the hard, dry outline of what once had been living and luxuriant growth. There are, it is true, signs that Christianity has become more apparent: the necessity for order, for government, and for discipline, has become apparent; but with this necessity there has arisen another, which could not have been perceived by one who had fallen under the yoke of an unethical dogmatism.

The new necessity is the necessity of more humane views of the order of life, and larger thoughts concerning the work of Christianity in the world. There are a number of questions which fill men's minds and tongues which the writer dismisses as indifferent and valueless. One thing is the beginning and end of all—charity, out of a pure conscience and of faith unfeigned (1 Tim. i. 5—7). It is because men have forgotten this supreme ethical goal of teaching that divisions of opinion and irresponsible dogmatists have arisen. The line of demarcation between the Church and the world is not to be made darker and broader. All, whether they have accepted formally the teaching of Christ or not, are to be viewed as objects of prayer and intercession, because all are dear to the heart of God. "I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men—for kings and for all that are in authority . . . for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour who

will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 1—4); and in the same spirit the writer says later that God is "the Saviour of all men."

In this latter case, he is defending society against the spirit of extravagant asceticism which he foresees will develop with the growth of ecclesiastical pride. Men will come to look upon external matters as making the difference between man and man. Marriage will be forbidden, and questions of bodily exercise will occupy men's attention. It will be forgotten that the inward spirit of godliness is of the first importance. Men may differ much in outward action. Many things are indifferent, but the spirit in which they are done is of measureless importance. Godliness is profitable unto all things. Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving (1 Tim. iv. 4). The one thing to be dreaded is the outward form without the inward life (2 Tim. iii. 5). The real foundation of men's spiritual life is inward—spiritual and ethical—not external (2 Tim. ii. 19). Outwardly there will always be variety. Vessels of various forms, materials, and uses will be found in the Master's house. To be a clean vessel and serviceable is the matter of main importance for each man's self. For the rest, the Master of the house must judge. Hereafter the division will be made by Him who cannot err. For the present, the real call of the grace of God is a call to godliness, temperance, righteousness, to good works and not to profitless questions and contentions (Titus ii. 11—14 and iii. 8, 9). More might be said, but there is enough here to show that the same ethical spirit which urged the claims of righteousness, toleration, and charity elsewhere (Gal. v. 16 *sqq.*; Rom. vi. 11 *sqq.* 12, 18) is not wanting in these Epistles.

6. *The Balance of Critical Opinion.*—But whatever may be said on this subject, we are met with the frankest confessions of the Pauline character of these letters. Thus Ewald, Pfeiderer, and Hausrath see, in two passages of the Second Epistle to Timothy (chap. i. 15—18, and iv. 9—21) genuine Pauline elements. Renan, after having explicitly said that these three Epistles were forged, proceeds to say, "Some passages in these three Epistles are also so beautiful that the question might be asked whether the forger had not some authentic letters of St. Paul in his possession which he embodied in his apocryphal compositions." ("The Christian Church," chap. vi., p. 52, in the English translation.) In other words, the force of St. Paul's hand is felt. It is like the question of the genuineness of a picture. The hand of the master is recognised somewhere even by those who cannot accept it as completely genuine.

On the whole, then, the result is this: The biographical difficulties are great, but they cannot be called decisive against the Pauline authorship of these letters. The hypothesis that the letters were forgeries is beset by still greater difficulties. The external evidence is wholly on the side of the genuineness; and the linguistic argument cannot be quoted as decisive against it. The historical argument, grounded on the allusions to certain heretical notions and the ripe organisation of the Church evidenced in the Epistles, has not the force which has been attributed to them. The heretical notions may be shown to be alluded to elsewhere in St. Paul's genuine writings; and the argument based on Church organisation, is, I think, largely illusory.

Space forbids me to enter further into these questions. It will at any rate be some consolation to those who have found in these Epistles much teaching and refreshment to know that the influence of St. Paul is recognised in these letters even by those who will not acknowledge that they are St. Paul's. We can still listen to the old Apostle declaring his unshaken faith and his experience of the unfailing help of his Master. The Lord stood with me and strengthened me. The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL

TO

PHILEMON.

1. *Character of the Epistle.*—The place of the Epistle to Philemon among the New Testament books has been compared to the position of Ruth among those of the Old Testament. It is “an idyl of domestic life,” in which we escape from the storm of controversy. Timothy is associated with Paul in the greeting, and formally the letter is addressed to the Church of which Philemon was a member; but really it is a private letter from Paul to Philemon. The others may have been included in the address because Paul wished that Onesimus should not merely be reinstated in Philemon’s household, but should be admitted to the fellowship of the Church.

Of Philemon nothing is known beyond what may be gathered from this letter and that to the Colossians, unless we accept as additional information the statement of Theodoret that he saw Philemon’s house in Colossæ. That he was resident in Colossæ appears from Col. iv. 9. He had been brought to the Christian faith by Paul (19), and had become a prominent and useful member of the Church (4—7), if not its founder (cp. Col. ii. 1, and Philemon 1). His wife, Appia, was also a Christian, and Archippus is commonly supposed to have been their son, and was certainly an active member of the Church (Col. iv. 17).

2. *Occasion and Purpose.*—The occasion of the letter was peculiar. Onesimus, one of Philemon’s slaves, had committed some delinquency, possibly, as Dr. Abbott suggests, an unpremeditated theft (cp. 18), and had absconded. Naturally he turned his face to Rome, to which every road led, and where hiding could best be secured, and a new life most readily entered. Whether impelled by want or by curiosity, or by weariness of wrong-doing, or perhaps by mere accident, he met with Paul, and was arrested by his words. To the life in Christ opened to him by Paul he gave himself cordially, and with his slave’s handiness

soon made himself so useful that the Apostle parted with him reluctantly (11—14). But to retain him Paul feels would be to steal him, or at any rate to deprive Philemon of the pleasure of voluntarily sending him to assist and minister to him (14). Besides, it would be better both for Onesimus and for Philemon that the penitent and Christianised slave should return to his master. Accordingly he is sent with this exquisitely worded letter which, if he heard it read, or himself wrote it as Paul's amanuensis, must have shown him that his forgiveness was a foregone conclusion.

The delicacy, courtesy, and right feeling exhibited in the letter have again and again been remarked upon. After quoting the very similar letter of the younger Pliny, Bishop Lightfoot proceeds to compare the two, and says: "The younger Pliny is the noblest type of a true Roman gentleman, and this touching letter needs no words of praise. Yet, if purity of diction be excepted, there will hardly be any difference of opinion in awarding the palm to the Christian Apostle. As an expression of simple dignity, of refined courtesy, of large sympathy, and of warm personal affection, the Epistle to Philemon stands unrivalled." A playfulness too, which rarely had opportunity in Paul's life of coming to the surface, appears in the eleventh verse. "Onesimus (Profitable) who was to thee in time past unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me;" and even more obviously in verse twenty, "Yea, brother, may I be profited by thee in the Lord."

3. *Authenticity*.—The authenticity of this note is undoubted. It was included in the first collection of Pauline writings, which was made by Marcion about the year 140 A.D. Baur, indeed, was compelled, by his rejection of Colossians, whose authenticity is implicated with that of Philemon, to reject this Epistle also, but he was conscious of the awkwardness of his position and apologizes for it. "In the case of this Epistle," he says, "more than any other, if criticism should inquire for evidence in favour of its apostolic name, it seems liable to the reproach of hypercriticism, of exaggerated suspicion, of restless doubt, from the attacks of which nothing is safe. What has criticism to do with this short, attractive, friendly letter, inspired as it is by the noblest Christian feeling, and which has never yet been touched by the breath of suspicion?" Notwithstanding this freedom from suspicion the letter is assailed by Baur, who supposes it was intended as a romance from which readers might learn that what was lost in the world was recovered in Christianity, and that for ever. It might also serve to illustrate the manner in which slaves should be dealt with in the Church. Certainly if these were the writer's purposes, he lost his labour, for the early

Church took very slight notice of the Epistle, and did not draw from it these lessons.

4. *Effect of the Epistle.*—That the Epistle to Philemon had any considerable effect in ameliorating the condition of slaves, or in accomplishing their emancipation, was not to be expected. From the first, slaves were freely admitted into the Church, and some of them rose to office in it. Their servile condition was no bar to their admission to Church privileges, while of some of these privileges it greatly enhanced the value. But as a general rule Christian masters retained their slaves in slavery, although the force of Christ's spirit taught them to deal more justly and tenderly with them, and gradually it came to be considered a religious act to emancipate or ransom slaves. But no general emancipation was thought of until the ninth century. Indeed the Church herself frequently held slaves as ecclesiastical property. The emancipation of slaves and other great social changes have been effected not by edicts issued by Christ and his Apostles, but by the gradual and inevitable pervasion of the whole of human life by the spirit of Christ.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

1. *Author*.—An ordinary reader of the Bible would notice that the Epistle to the Hebrews is separated from the Epistles written by St. Paul to other Churches by those which he addressed to individuals; and he would perhaps observe that neither the name of the writer nor of the readers is found in it. But the title supplies the information, and the subscription at the end further states that it was written from Italy (and sent) by (the hand of) Timothy. He would not suspect that the facts which had attracted his attention raise some of the most difficult questions connected with the books of the New Testament.

(i.) The antiquity of the Epistle is remarkably attested. There is repeated reference to it in St. Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians, written before the end of the first century—a fact noticed by Eusebius, E. H. iii. 38. Clement does not name any book of the New Testament except, in one place, St. Paul's (first) Epistle to the Corinthians. But he adopts the language of our Epistle more than that of any of the others. One instance will show how he makes use of it. "Through him the Master willed that we should taste of immortal knowledge; *Who being the brightness of His Majesty is so much greater than the Angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name.* For so it is written; *Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire;* but of His Son the Master said thus: *Thou art My Son, I this day have begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Thy possession.* And again He said unto Him; *Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet* (36)." This anonymous use of the Epistle is continued by Justin Martyr about the middle of the second century, and somewhat later in a fragment of Pinytus of Crete—Eusebius, E. H. iv. 23.

The first distinct mention is in Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 165—220, who ascribes it to St. Paul, and often quotes it. But Eusebius records (E. H. vi. 14) from one of his lost works his modification of St. Paul's authorship, as far as regards the form in which we have it. "Clement, in his *Outlines*, to speak generally, has given concise explanations of all the Canonical Scriptures. . . . And, moreover, he says that the Epistle to the Hebrews is Paul's, but that it was written to the Hebrews in the Hebrew dialect, and that Luke, having carefully translated it, published it for the use of the Greeks. And that it is owing to the fact that he translated it that the complexion of this Epistle and that of the Acts is found to be the same. Further he remarks that it is natural that the phrase *Paul an Apostle* does not occur in the Subscription, for in writing to the Hebrews, who had conceived a prejudice against him, he was wise in not repelling them at the beginning by affixing his name. And then, a little further on, he adds: and as the blessed presbyter before now used to say, since the Lord as being the Apostle of the Almighty, was sent unto the Hebrews, Paul, through his modesty, inasmuch as he was sent to the Gentiles, does not inscribe himself Apostle of the Hebrews, both on account of the honour due to the Lord and because it was a work of supererogation that he addressed an Epistle to the Hebrews also, since he was herald and apostle to the Gentiles." The "blessed presbyter" spoken of is probably Pantænus, Clement's predecessor as head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria. This carries the tradition of St. Paul's being the writer a long way back towards the Apostolic age. Clement receives it and passes it on, adding the statement about St. Luke, whether from tradition or as his own conjecture.

Origen succeeded Clement in his office, and Eusebius tells us how he expressed himself on the subject. "In addition to these statements he (Origen) thus discusses the Epistle to the Hebrews in his Homilies upon it: Every one who is competent to judge of differences of diction would acknowledge that the style of the Epistle entitled To the Hebrews does not exhibit the Apostle's rudeness and simplicity in speech, though he acknowledged himself to be *simple in his speech*, that is in his diction; but it is more truly Greek in its composition. And again, that the thoughts of the Epistle are wonderful, and not second to the acknowledged writings of the Apostle, every one who pays attention to the reading of the Apostle's works would also grant to be true. And, after other remarks, he adds: "If I were to express my own opinion, I should say that the thoughts are the Apostle's, but the diction and composition that of some one who recorded from memory the Apostle's teaching, and, as

it were, illustrated with a brief commentary the sayings of his Master. If, then, any Church hold this Epistle to be Paul's, we cannot find fault with it for so doing; for it was not without good reason that the men of old time have handed it down as Paul's. But who it was who wrote the Epistle, God only knows certainly. The account which has reached us is [manifold], some saying that Clement, who became Bishop of Rome, wrote it, while others assign it to Luke, author of the Gospel and the Acts."—E. H. vi. 25. Here Origen goes beyond Clement of Alexandria in giving it as his opinion that the writer was not St. Paul, but one of his scholars, the teaching being identical, so that it might be said to be ultimately his. Accordingly, in his own quotations he speaks of it as a writing of Paul or "the Apostle." In this sense the Church of Alexandria continued to accept it. Eusebius himself agreed with Clement that Paul wrote it in Hebrew, but he was inclined to think that Clement of Rome was its translator—E. H. iii. 98.

The Pauline authorship was assumed, apparently without entering further into the matter, by the other Greek Fathers of the fourth century. Thus, in all the Greek Churches of the East, it seems to have been always recognised as Canonical, deriving its authority directly or indirectly from St. Paul. Similarly, in the native Syrian Church it was included among the Canonical Books in the old version (Peshito), but it found a place after Philemon, and was not attributed to St. Paul in the Title or Subscription: while Jacob of Nisibis in the earlier and Ephrem Syrus in the later part of the fourth century treat it as a writing of St. Paul.

(ii.) The history of its reception in the Western Church is very different. We have seen the high estimation in which it was held by Clement of Rome. After him there followed a long silence about it. The testimony of Irenæus, though writing in Gaul in the latter part of the second century, strictly belongs to the Church of Asia Minor, whence he came in his youth. Eusebius tells us that he mentioned the Epistle in one of his works and quoted from it, and a few coincidences of language are found in his extant writings, but he was said not to have considered that St. Paul was the author. Of those who strictly belonged to the Latin Churches Tertullian is the first who mentions it by name. He does so in one place only (*de Pudic.* 20), and then not as the writing of Paul, but Barnabas, assigning it a secondary authority, which shows that it had no place in the Canon of the Church of North Africa. And this is the more remarkable because the passage quoted is vi. 4—8, which at first sight favours his Montanist views, so that he would have every

inducement to claim the highest possible authority for the Epistle.

It was not quoted by Novatian nor St. Cyprian. Eusebius mentions its rejection by the Church of Rome in his own day—E. H. iii. 3. It is not before the middle of the fourth century that we find it used by Western writers, first by Hilary of Poitiers, and subsequently by St. Ambrose and Philastrius of Brescia. These writers speak of the support which the Novatians affected to derive from it, which may have encouraged Church writers in their disinclination to acknowledge it. But new influences had now set in. The Arian Controversy made the different parts of the Church better acquainted with each other, and the Western divines were impressed by the recognition of the Epistle which they found in the East.

In A.D. 397 it was reckoned as St. Paul's along with his thirteen Epistles in the Canon of the Third Council of Carthage. Jerome and Augustine lent their powerful help in the same direction, treating the Epistle as possessed of the authority of St. Paul, though not concealing the uncertainty of themselves and others as to the degree in which he was its actual author. After their time it came into full recognition everywhere, and was mostly thought to have been written by St. Paul.

(iii.) Enough has been said about its canonicity, but we must pursue the question of authorship. It arose again at the time of the Reformation. Erasmus and Cajetan on the one side, and Luther and Calvin on the other, were satisfied that it was not written by St. Paul. The chief reasons for not assigning it to him are: (1) The improbability that he would write to a Church the members of which to a great extent regarded him with dislike. (2) In ii. 3 the writer classes himself along with his readers among those who had received the Gospel at second-hand, from those who had heard the Lord; whereas St. Paul was accustomed to vindicate his authority by the direct revelation and commission which he had received—cf. Gal. i. 1; ii. 2, 6. (3) The difference of style, which in St. Paul shows no trace of art. Speech was to him merely an instrument of expressing his meaning in the readiest way, and consequently it was a reflection of the impetuosity of his feeling and the rapid transitions of his thought. The writer of the Hebrews has a stately manner, showing its cultivation in his most moving utterances. His sentences are rhythmical and balanced, and his words carefully chosen, frequently with a view to a peculiar effect depending on the repetition of sounds, which is lost in translation. (4) The quotations in this Epistle are introduced in a different way from St. Paul's; they are taken from the LXX., commonly

with exactness, and show little or no acquaintance with Hebrew. St. Paul sometimes quotes from the LXX., sometimes translates from the Hebrew, and often relies on his memory. (5) The Epistle shows a familiarity with the Alexandrian tone of thought, and probably with the writings of Philo Judæus. (6) The doctrinal agreement of this Epistle with St. Paul's teaching is commonly admitted, but it differs from his mode of presentation. St. Paul dwells upon the Law and its having become obsolete, not on ceremonial as the counterpart of Christ's priestly work. The conception of Faith in c. xi. is distinct from that of the Faith which justifies without the works of the Law. The prominence which St. Paul gives to the Resurrection of our Lord is not found here, and nothing is said about the admission of the Gentiles to the privileges of Israel. These arguments, which have various degrees of weight, have prevailed with the greater number of the students of the Epistle.

But it would not be fair to an opinion so widely held in former times to dismiss the question without listening to a reply. The argument built on ii. 3, it is said, is not conclusive, for in his speech at Antioch in Pisidia St. Paul speaks in the way which is said to have been impossible (Acts xiii. 31, 32). His fear of being unacceptable to the Hebrews was overcome by his ardent love for his countrymen, but it had the effect of restraining his impetuosity and making him weigh his words, which produces the difference of style. Origen said that there was no sign of that "rudeness of speech" of which the Apostle was conscious (2 Cor. xi. 6). But he is there speaking ironically. He was not ignorant of the rules of rhetoric, though he commonly disregarded them. Here they are purposely observed. Chrysostom, as good a judge of the Apostle's style as Origen, speaks of it enthusiastically. His manner varies according to circumstances in his other Epistles. And from 1 Cor. xiii. all can judge of the refinement which it admitted of when he saw occasion. And the whole difference in the statement of doctrine arises from the peculiarity of his aim in this Epistle. By such considerations as these we might explain to ourselves the facts of the case, if there had been an absolute agreement on the question in antiquity. But as it is, they are commonly not felt to be convincing.

Can we then ascertain the writer? We can only make conjectures. And yet our choice is limited. It must be admitted that, apart from other considerations, the few hints which we have in the tone of authority, together with the consciousness of lying under suspicion (xiii. 18), and the familiar mention of Timothy (xiii. 23), point to no one so naturally as to St. Paul. But if we have to search for some other writer, the fundamental

agreement of the teaching with that of the Apostle, the great intimacy with his language, and what is said about Timothy, lead us to look for him within the circle of St. Paul's companions.

We have seen that in ancient times it was thought by some that Clement of Rome (Philippians iv. 3) or St. Luke had translated the Epistle from St. Paul's Hebrew original. But the fancy of its being a version is universally abandoned, as forbidden by the phenomena which its language presents. They were also considered by others to have been its authors. This notion finds little support as regards Clement. But St. Luke's title, not so much as writing independently though full of the thought of St. Paul, as under his direction and superintendence, has been ably maintained. The striking resemblance between the language of the Epistle and St. Luke's writings is the chief evidence. But after allowing for the difference between historical compositions and an argumentative letter, the dissimilarity of style is too great. And the Epistle is evidently written by a fellow-countryman, while it is inferred from Col. iv. 10—11, 14, that St. Luke was a Gentile.

Tertullian says that Barnabas was the author. Several circumstances are in favour of this. He was a Levite of Cyprus, and consequently an Hellenist, but also an early member of the Church at Jerusalem, which might account for the relations existing between the writer and that Church, if it be the one addressed, see xiii. 18—19, 23. We should not, however, expect him, being probably older than St. Paul (cf. Acts ix. 36—37; vii. 58), to be writing after his death. Nor are we prepared by what we read of him to find the peculiar ability, or the Alexandrine culture which appear in the Epistle. But these are negative considerations; and the confident way in which Tertullian speaks produces the impression that he was not expressing an individual opinion, but the view which was current in Africa and at Rome.

The most attractive suggestion, however, is that of Luther, who fixed upon Apollos. In Acts xviii. 24—28, we read that he was a Jew, an Alexandrian by race, eloquent or learned, and mighty in the Scriptures; and that he mightily convinced the Jews at Corinth, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ. The character of his work there was such that a party was formed which looked on him as their head (see 1 Cor. i.—iv). They were probably drawn to him by that literary training and style of thought which he brought from Alexandria. His intimacy with St. Paul appears in 1 Cor. xvi. 12; Titus iii. 13. And the former of these passages is thought to contain proof of his

modesty and considerateness in avoiding all appearance of encouraging the divisions at Corinth; which agrees well with the reserve of the writer of the Hebrews, who contented himself with those personal references which were enough at the time, but have left posterity in doubt. None of St. Paul's friends seem to fulfil so well the required conditions.

2. *The Persons Addressed; Date and Place of Writing.*—Apart from the Title, we have to gather from the Epistle itself that it was written to Jews. At first sight it might be thought to be addressed to all believers of that nation; but we see from xiii. 17—19, 23, that some particular Church is intended. But which was it? It seems impossible to give a decided answer. The absence of all reference to Gentile Christians, the danger of apostasy owing to the attraction of the Jewish ritual, and the familiarity with it which it implied, lead our thoughts naturally to the Church of Jerusalem. And this suits fairly well with the mention of a persecution (xii. 3—13) which was not so severe as an earlier one (x. 32—34, cf. Acts viii. 1—3). But the ministering to the saints (vi. 10) hardly agrees with the poverty of the Church of Jerusalem. And no follower of St. Paul, so far as we know, was on such intimate terms with it, except perhaps St. Barnabas, or was in a position to address such reproofs to the Mother Church. And why, on this supposition, should the language of the Epistle be Greek, and all quotations made from the Greek version? The Church of Alexandria has been thought of, in connection with Apollos. But we know little of its early history, or its connection with Timothy. And it was here that the tradition of Pauline authorship was the strongest. Analogous difficulties present themselves in the case of Rome, Corinth, or Ephesus.

We must remain equally uncertain as to where it was written. The mention of the release of Timothy and the message, "They of Italy salute you," together with the belief that St. Paul was in prison, but expecting shortly to be set free (xiii. 23—4), suggested that it was written at Rome. On the theory of a different authorship every clue is lost.

Its date cannot have been early (see v. 12; x. 32; xiii. 7, Rev. Ver.). It must have been written after St. Paul's death and the release of Timothy (who had been probably imprisoned at Rome after obeying St. Paul's summons (see 2 Timothy iv. 9), and before the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. This is not a necessary inference from the language of the passages in which the Jewish Ceremonial is spoken of as still being carried on, for it might be used in an ideal sense; but after that catastrophe the solemn argument of the Epistle would have been needless.

3. *Object and Character.*—The Epistle is called a “word of exhortation” (xiii. 22). This expresses its aim. The Jewish Christians were suffering persecution, and not only felt its burden, but were cast down by disappointed hopes of the glorious coming of the Lord (x. 36—37); while their unbelieving countrymen were elated with that confidence in the victorious mission of Israel which made them defy the Roman power. They had found the difficulty of dispensing with the external support of the ordinances of the Law. The splendour of its Ritual still impressed them, and all the more from its contrast with the simple worship of the Church. They were at a standstill in spiritual life and intelligence, or rather had gone back (v. 11—12), and gave cause for fearing that they would fall away (vi. 3—8).

Full of his purpose and the sublimity of his subject, the writer puts aside as inopportune all preface and personal allusion, and states the sum of his arguments at the very beginning, compressing it into the three first verses. Here he declares the finality of the work on our behalf of Christ, in whom God completed His gradual revelation of Himself, His exalted nature, and the glory which received Him in heaven. In developing his argument he begins with a point of dignity belonging to the Old Covenant in having been introduced by the ministry of angels, which was more prominent in the contemporary Jewish teaching than in the Pentateuch, and shows the superiority of Christ to the angels; which leads to the honour put upon human nature by His assuming it, and the part which suffering has in perfecting the Captain of our salvation in His office, and further to its place in the perfecting of ourselves. The superiority of Christ to Moses, the human agent in the giving of the Old Covenant, is then established.

The third part of the argument is the temporary nature of the Jewish Ceremonial and the Covenant with which it was connected. Old habits of thought made the Hebrew believers feel that a Divine Institution must be permanent. The writer reminds them of its imperfection, and shows that the ideal priesthood belongs to Christ, and that the ideal sanctuary is in heaven. He confirms his teaching by recalling the fact that the Old Testament prepared them for a new covenant (viii. 8—12; Jeremiah xxxi. 31—34), and for a new form of priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm cx. 4). He was a relic of the combination in one person of the offices of king and priest, which was found elsewhere in simple times (compare, “*Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Phœbique sacerdos.*”—Virg., *Æn.* iii. 80). It seemed fitting at one time that the king, who was a representative of

God's government, should also personate his subjects in their atonements and thanksgivings. But the inability of one man to discharge such weighty offices led to their separation. Yet absolutely it was the higher order of things, and so in Abraham, the forefather of the Levitical priests, "the less was blessed of the greater." Many hundred years after this event the Psalmist set before his countrymen in the person of Melchizedek the type of that higher order which was to be restored, when the inadequacy of the ceremonial ministration of Aaron's sons should be replaced by a true priest, and misrule should come to an end under a true king, both titles meeting in the person of Messiah. As the meaning of this type was not obvious, it is elaborately explained, more stress being laid on the perpetuity of Melchizedek's priesthood than on his kingly office. The tendency of all this was to establish their hearts. The inherent completeness of Christ only needed the experience of suffering and the discipline of obedience. Thus perfected, He sat on God's right hand. And He makes His brethren perfect by the one offering of Himself and by His help. But they must be content to suffer in faith and patience that they may receive the recompense of the reward.

The writer's practical object is never lost sight of. A trace of this is seen in the way in which he confines his words to the Hebrews. In ii. 6—16 the broader prospect which the Incarnation opens (9, 14) is narrowed to the seed of Abraham; and the width of meaning which those words had gained, so as to include the Gentiles, though doubtless present to his own mind, is nowhere brought forward.

The argument, it will be noticed, is directed to Christian Jews, not to those who were unconverted. The Incarnation and the facts of our Lord's life on earth are taken for granted. This has to be remembered in reading some of the passages cited from the Old Testament, *e.g.* i. 5; ii. 12, 13. They are adduced on the principle that its full meaning is found in Christ. We may mention further that some of the quotations, *e.g.* ii. 7; x. 5; xii. 26, are adapted to the purpose for which they are cited only in the form in which they appear in the LXX.

Some apparent inaccuracies, such as in ix. 2—4 (where the altar of incense is omitted, or more probably is intended by the word which is translated "censer," in which case it is wrongly placed within the veil), have been regarded as signs of a want of familiarity with particulars. But this can hardly be a case of ignorance. It is more likely that, in accordance with his habit of looking at things in their higher relations, the writer associates the altar of incense with the Holy of Holies, to which it

belonged symbolically more than to the Holy Place. In the same manner he speaks only of the Tabernacle, never hinting at the existence of the Temple. He cleaves to the idea, and disregards departures from it.

4. *Analysis.*

i. 1—3. *God's successive revelations completed in His Son.*

4—ii. 18. *Superiority of Christ to the Angels.*—Shown by a comparison of God's language to Him and them, 4—14. Warning, ii. 1—4. Shown in God's subjection of all things to man, 5—16. First mention of Christ as High Priest, 17—18.

iii. 1—6. *Superiority of Christ to Moses.*

7—iv. 13. *Warning.*—Not to imitate the unbelief of Israel in old time, and so fail to enter into rest, 7—19; the promise of which is unfulfilled, iv. 1—8. It is a Sabbath rest like God's, 9—11. Disobedience cannot escape detection, 12—13.

iv. 14—x. 18. *Superiority of Christ's Priesthood.*—Hortatory, 14—16. Characteristics of a high priest, v. 1—4. The last of them illustrated in Christ. First mention of Melchizedek, 5—10. Digression, in which they are rebuked for dulness of hearing, 11—vi. 20. Explanation of the type of Melchizedek, vii. 1—28. Christ is the ideal Priest, viii. 1—13. The non-ideal nature of the Tabernacle and the Old Covenant, ix. 1—x. 18.

19—xiii. 17. *Exhortation and Warning.*—Having a new and living way to draw near to God and to hold fast their profession, and to remember the former times, 19—39. Examples of Faith xi. 1—40. Exhortation, xii. 1—17. Contrast between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, *i.e.* the heavenly Jerusalem, 18—29. Miscellaneous exhortations, xiii. 1—17.

18—25. *Conclusion.*—The writer asks their prayers that he may be restored to them, 18—19; he prays for them. Doxology, 20—21. He begs them to bear the word of exhortation, 22. The release of Timothy, and a promise to come to them; salutations, 23—24.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

1. *The Seven Catholic Epistles.*—Next in order to the Epistles of St. Paul and that to the Hebrews come the General or Catholic Epistles. By these terms were meant in the first instance circular Epistles, *i.e.* such as were intended for more than one Church. Thus understood they are inapplicable to 1 and 2 John. But Eusebius, who is the first to use the word “Catholic” in reference to all the seven, appears to mean that they were in common use in the Church, which sense is appropriate to the whole of them. They are ascribed to James, Peter, John, and Jude, who with the exception of the last, are described by St. Paul as men “who seemed to be pillars” (Gal. ii. 9).

Each of these three, as well as St. Paul, represented different modes of apprehending our Lord and His work, and took distinct parts in building up the Church. And the proof of this is found in their writings. That there should be this variety in their contributions to one common end will not surprise us, when we remember that while St. Paul was “a chosen vessel” to carry Christ’s name to the Gentiles, St. John stood in a tender personal relation to Him, and St. Peter received from Him, when he was in His presence for the first time, a name which embodied His foresight of the work which he was to do in the early days of the Church.

2. *The Epistle of James. The Writer.*—The first of these general Epistles is that of James, a place which it occupied in the time of Eusebius. Its author must have been one of the three men of that name who are mentioned in the New Testament—James, the son of Zebedee, brother of John, and one of the apostles; another apostle, James, the son of Alphæus; and James, the Lord’s brother. There is an almost universal consent that the first is excluded by the early date of his martyrdom (Acts xii. 2). The last two have been very commonly regarded as one and the same person. But this view is now very generally given up. The question is intricate, and is fully discussed in the study on Jude, to which the reader is referred.

(i.) If, then, we distinguish James, the son of Alphæus, from James, the Lord’s brother, which of them wrote this Epistle? Its

tone of authority, not expressed but implied, points to the more conspicuous of them. This was the Lord's brother, who appears as chief in authority in the Church of Jerusalem in the latter part of the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistle to the Galatians. On the other hand, no separate mention of the son of Alphæus, any more than of the greater part of the apostles, occurs after that which is found in Acts i. 13. Still we may ask, if the writer was the brother of the Lord, why he does not give himself that title. The answer seems to be that, in the spirit of the words recorded in Matt. xii. 48—50, Luke xi. 27—28, he placed himself on the level of all those who served the risen and ascended Jesus. In the same way Jude, another of our Lord's brethren, is contented to call himself the "servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James."

(ii.) The names of these brethren of the Lord were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas (Matt. xiii. 55), where his sisters are also mentioned, but not by name. What we read further of them in the New Testament may be stated thus. They accompanied Jesus, His mother, and His disciples, to Capernaum (John ii. 12); they did not believe in Him (John vii. 2—9); and this is confirmed by St. Mark's statement (iii. 21), that His friends, *i.e.* His brethren and mother (see verse 31), "went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, He is beside Himself."

(iii.) We may stop here to inquire what was the nature of their relationship. The natural inference from the way in which they are spoken of is that they were brothers in the strict sense, sons of Joseph and Mary. This opinion was held by a few respectable names in antiquity, and has its supporters at the present day. It was the leading tenet of a sect who were branded as heretics in consequence, but its most prominent defender was Helvidius, a Roman lawyer, A.D. 383. He was attacked by St. Jerome with unmerited fierceness, for he did not wish to dishonour the Lord's mother, but to uphold the sanctity of marriage.

Jerome himself originated the view that "brethren" meant kinsmen, or, more definitely, "cousins," the sons of Alphæus and the sister of the Lord's mother. This met with immediate approval, and became the prevailing interpretation for centuries, displacing the more ancient one, that they were sons of Joseph by a former wife, the chief supporter of which was Epiphanius. The question is one which raises strong and even passionate feeling, but there is one matter of fact which has not perhaps been attended to enough.

When our Lord was upon the cross He entrusted His mother, not to any of His brethren, but to St. John. It is not probable that He would have done so if they had been her own sons. On the other hand, the close connection with her in which they are constantly found, and the mention of His sisters also, as well as

the fact that James was known to Josephus as the brother of Jesus, appear to show that Jerome's sense is too remote. The subject cannot be adequately discussed in a few words. It will be found treated in an exhaustive manner in Bishop Lightfoot's edition of the Galatians, which has done much to restore to the older view the favour which it lost.

(iv.) Our Lord's Resurrection put an end to His brethren's unbelief, and to James He granted a special appearance (1 Cor. xv. 7). We find them all mentioned, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, as being in close union with the apostles after the Ascension (Acts i. 13—14). In 1 Cor. ix. 5, St. Paul claims the same right to travel with a wife as the brethren of the Lord, or Cephas. The remaining notices relate exclusively to James. We learn from Gal. i. 18, that when St. Paul came to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, to visit Peter, he saw James at the same time. And in Acts xii. 17, Peter directs that his release from prison should be told to James and the brethren, which points to his holding an official position in the Church at Jerusalem. This appears more clearly later on from the tone and effect of his speech at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 13 *sqq.*, compared with Gal. ii. 9—12). The last mention of him is when he and the elders of the Church gave a public reception to Paul at the end of his third apostolical journey (Acts xxi. 18—25).

(v.) It would seem that the apostles made over to him after a time the government of the Church of Jerusalem, for which he was recommended by his relation to the Lord, and by his character and principles. He conformed to the law, sharing no doubt the feeling of the other members of that Church, that the ordinances of the old dispensation had not been done away for them, but were filled out with new life and meaning in Christ. And thus the conformity of which he set the example, joined with the respect which he won from all, seems to have long secured for his Church an immunity from serious persecution. As regards the Gentiles, the liberality of his sentiments is attested by St. Paul, and by his own words (Acts xv. 13—19), while his forethought on behalf of the prejudices of the Jewish Christians is equally shown by the concessions which he proposed on the part of the Gentiles (20—21), and by his inducing St. Paul to give a practical proof that he neither taught the believing Jews "to forsake Moses," nor did so himself (Acts xxi. 20—24).

(vi.) His position, and that of those over whom he presided, was intelligible and lawful, for circumcision and the other ordinances belonged to the national as well as the religious life; but it was destined to cease. As we read the Acts of the Apostles our attention is transferred to Antioch as a new centre, and to the

spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles. The mother Church retains the respect due to it, but it is forced by poverty to accept the alms of the converts from the heathen. A further blow was struck by the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. It must have led them to reconsider their position, and have opened their eyes to the transitory character of the Mosaic Law and worship. And their flight to Pella in anticipation of that event marked them out in the eyes of their countrymen as traitors to the national cause. The persecution of them by Barcochab during his rebellion against the Romans, A.D. 132—135, tended to sift them still more. Many abandoned their claim to the privileges on which they had prided themselves, and blended with their brethren of Gentile origin, while the rest took up a sectarian position, and lingered on under the name of Ebionites into the fifth century.

(vii.) Our further information about St. James is derived from a fragment of Hegesippus, the first historian of the Church, *circa* 170, preserved in Eusebius (E. H. ii. 23), and from Josephus. The former tells us that he was called "The Just" by all men, and that "he was holy from his mother's womb. He drank no wine nor strong drink, neither did he eat flesh. No razor ever touched his head; he did not anoint himself with oil; he did not use the bath. He alone was allowed to enter into the holy place. For he wore no wool, but only fine linen. And he would enter into the Temple alone, and be found there kneeling on his knees and asking forgiveness for the people."

There is no reason to doubt the general reverence in which he was held, nor the strict sanctity of his life. He may have been an Ascetic, but there is no trace of it in his Epistle, and his continual intercessions are very probable. But fabulous matter runs through the whole of Hegesippus's account, which he is supposed to have drawn from Ebionite sources. It appears especially in the dramatic narrative of St. James's martyrdom. Owing to the progress of the Gospel the Pharisees became alarmed and placed him on the pinnacle of the Temple at the Passover, in order that he might "persuade the multitude not to go astray after Jesus." But he took the opportunity of confessing Him. The enraged Pharisees threw him down, after which he was stoned, and at length killed by a blow from a fuller's club.

Josephus, who was contemporary, gives a different and more probable account (Antiq. xx. 9. 1), according to which Ananias, the High Priest, brought James, the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, and certain others before the Council on a charge of breaking the law, and ordered them to be stoned to death. He had chosen for this purpose the interval between the death of Festus and the arrival of his successor. But the dissatisfaction which this proceeding caused amongst the most equitable of the

Jews led to complaints against him, which ended in his being displaced from his office. This would fix A.D. 62 as the year of St. James's death. In the Clementines, which are forgeries of the Ebionites, and fathered on Clement of Rome, St. James is termed "Bishop of Bishops," and regarded as practically the head of the whole Church.

3. *Place and Time of Writing.*—St. James would naturally write from Jerusalem; it is in agreement with this that some of the natural phenomena to which he alludes belong particularly to Palestine; such as salt and bitter springs (iii. 11, 12), the early and latter rain (v. 7), and the scorching wind (Rev. Vers. i. 11). He writes "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," or "which are in the Dispersion" (cf. John vii. 35, 1 Pet. i. 1). He addresses only those who are Jews by birth; an incidental mark of this is his giving the name of "synagogue" to the place where they met for worship (ii. 2). There is no hint of the existence of any Christians of heathen origin. We do not know where these communities consisting entirely of Jewish Christians were situated; but we may suppose them to have been partly in Palestine and partly in neighbouring lands, the fruits of intercourse with the Church of Jerusalem at the great festivals, and of the unrecorded labours of the apostles, which must have been confined to their own countrymen. A little before his death, St. James reckoned the number of such believers as amounting to many thousands (Acts xxi. 20).

(i.) This absence of any reference to the Gentiles is probably a proof of the very early date of the Epistle. The grave questions originated by St. Paul's first apostolical journey, which came before the Council of Jerusalem for decision, would seem not to have arisen as yet. It is, at least, difficult to explain the maintenance of such complete silence about the Gentile converts subsequent to those events, especially after they had begun to contribute to the support of their poor brethren in Judæa.

(ii.) But we must assign a later date, if the Epistle shows, as many think, an acquaintance with St. Paul's writings. There are several expressions and passages in it which remind us of them strongly, and chiefly of the Romans. The most important are i. 22, cf. Rom. ii. 13; i. 3, Rom. v. 3; iv. 1, Rom. vii. 23. Both the passages in the first pair may probably be a reminiscence of our Lord's words, Matt. vii. 26. And there may be some common source for the two others in the habitual language of the Church (with i. 3, cf. also 1 Pet. i. 7, and with iv. 1, cf. 1 Pet. ii. 11) which we cannot trace.

(iii.) But ii. 14—26, presents more difficulty. Our first impression of this passage is, not only that it is inconsistent with St. Paul's teaching, but that it is intended to correct it or the

abuse of it. This led to Luther's well-known description of the Epistle as "a letter of straw." And in a later and more respectful mention of it, he stated as one of his reasons for not holding it to be the work of an apostle, that it contradicted Paul and all other Scripture in giving righteousness to works. On the other hand, the greater part of the older divines employed themselves in showing the agreement between St. Paul and St. James, in spite of appearances. But more recent inquiry leads to the conclusion that the two teachers were not opposed, because they had different objects in view, while using similar language.

St. James speaks of faith in one God—the distinguishing belief of Israel (ii. 19)—and declares that mere faith will not justify. The error which he opposed was a barren Pharisaic orthodoxy, akin to the reliance on the privilege of being Abraham's seed, which John the Baptist denounced (Matt. iii. 9, cf. Rom. ii. 17—29). We learn from Justin Martyr, in the next century (Dial. c. Tryph., p. 370), that there were Jews in his day, and others like them in this respect (Jewish-minded Christians), who said that "even if men are sinners, but know God, the Lord will not impute sin to them." But St. Paul combated the slighting of God's grace in Christ Jesus, which is ours through faith, on the part of those who looked for justification to their strict observance of the law of Moses.

St. James's rebuke was directed against a trust in a dead faith, which led to no works, "the *opus operatum* of faith;" St. Paul's fell on a trust in self-righteousness. We are apt to look upon St. Paul as the first to give prominence to faith, and the originator of the term "justification;" but there is evidence that these matters were discussed, along with the example of Abraham, before his time, in the Jewish schools, to which both he and St. James were indebted.

(iv.) If this view is right it bears on a question of more importance than the date of the Epistle. We find in it no injunctions as to the observance of ceremonial ordinances. If this was unnecessary owing to the agreement on this point of the writer and his readers, it still shows that it was not regarded as open to attack. This of itself is an objection to the view of the Tübingen school, which imagines that a fierce contest on this subject raged during the life of St. James and long afterwards. But at first sight his teaching about faith gives an encouragement to the idea of an hostility to St. Paul. On further examination this, too, disappears, and there remains nothing to disturb our conception of the fundamental unity of the leaders of the Church, to which we have testimony in Acts xv. and the Galatians.

4. *Character, Style, Quotations.*—The tone of the whole Epistle is practical, earnest, and stern in parts. It was occasioned, no

doubt, by the existence of the faults which he corrects—the results, perhaps, not so much of deterioration as of slow progress. When the law and the Gospel were blended in the convictions of the same person, the latter element may often have been small and its influence shallow. Thus we find warnings against respect for the rich (ii. 6, 7), a barren faith (14—26), forwardness in becoming teachers (iii. 1), bitter language (iii. 9, 10), defamation and uncharitable judgment (iv. 11, 12), fierce contentions and sensuality (iv. 1—3), and dishonest oppression of the poor (v. 1—6). But it may be doubted whether the worst features, such as iv. 2, v. 1—6, belong to members of the Church, and do not rather refer to their unbelieving countrymen, to whose consciences the writer appeals, so far as his words will reach them. There was need, also, of encouragement under trial. The various exhortations are enforced by the solemnity with which St. James looks forward to the Lord's coming.

(i.) There is little of distinctively Christian doctrine. Everything of the kind relates to the conception of our Lord's person in respect of His example (v. 11), authority (i. 1; v. 10), glory (ii. 1), power (v. 14—15); and His coming to judgment (v. 7—9); or to the word of truth, the instrument of a new birth (i. 18, 21). But the Gospel is not named. The rule of the life is the Law, but as advanced by our Lord into a "law of liberty" (ii. 12); itself delivered from the restrictions imposed at first for the hardness of men's hearts, and from narrowing traditions, and bestowing liberty in turn through freedom from sin (cf. John viii. 33—36). No mention occurs, as we have seen, of Jewish ordinances. And, on the other hand, the low value of mere externals is indicated by the fact that in the description of pure religion—the word used refers to the outward aspect of it—all that is ceremonial is omitted, and works of charity and habitual purity take its place. We are reminded throughout of our Lord's teaching as recorded in the three first Gospels, rather than of that side of it which is found in St. John, or the truths revealed after Pentecost.

(ii.) In respect of the organization of the Church, we find mention of elders who are to be summoned to pray for the sick man, and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord (v. 14; cf. Mark vi. 13, xvi. 18). It has been inferred from iii. 1, that no definite arrangement had yet been made for instruction in these Churches.

(iii.) The language is a very pure specimen of Hellenistic Greek. This is what might not have been expected. The style is simple and inartificial. There is little attempt to follow a distinct plan, or develop the connection of thought. The continuity of the whole is the writer's earnestness, culminating in the thoughts which belong to the second advent. From this point of view the

abrupt way in which the Epistle ends, without even a "Fare ye well," is not inappropriate; it shows the pressure of the expectation under which the appeal is made to save an erring brother while there is time.

(iv.) Among the quotations from the Old Testament, Lev. xix. 18, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is distinguished by the title of the Royal Law, in consequence, no doubt, of the prominence given to it by our Lord, Matt. xix. 19; xxii. 39. The Book of Proverbs is twice quoted, Prov. iii. 34, in iv. 6, and Prov. x. 12, in v. 20. And it is thought that St. James used the kindred teaching of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, the strongest resemblance being between i. 13 and Ecclus. xv. 11—12. In regard to the New Testament, the echoes of our Lord's teaching, and particularly of the Sermon on the Mount, are numerous, cf. i. 2, Matt. v. 10—12; i. 4, Matt. v. 48; i. 5, Matt. vii. 7; ii. 13, Matt. vi. 14—15; iii. 17—18, Matt. v. 9; iv. 4, Matt. vi. 24; iv. 11, Matt. vii. 1; v. 2, Matt. vi. 19; v. 10, Matt. v. 12; v. 12, Matt. v. 33; compare also iv. 10, Matt. xxiii. 12; iv. 12, Matt. x. 28; iv. 9, Luke vi. 25. The passages which seem parallel with others in St. Paul have been spoken of above. The quotations from the Proverbs are found again in 1 Peter v. 6, iv. 8, with the same deviations from the LXX. The resemblance between i. 12 and Rev. ii. 10 has been accounted for by the supposition of an unwritten saying of our Lord underlying both passages.

5. *Authenticity.*—Eusebius quotes the Epistle, but places it among the books which were disputed, but acknowledged by most (E. H. iii. 25), and he says (E. H. ii. 23), that not many of the ancients mentioned it. We find accordingly that the first who speaks of it by name is Origen (c. 230), who quotes it sometimes, and in one place as the Epistle "current" as that of James. Before him, traces of its use are only found in Irenæus and the Shepherd of Hermas, which brings us to the middle of the second century. It was accepted early by the Syrian Church, and included in their version. It had not apparently a place in the Old Latin, nor is it named in the Muratorian Canon. After the time of Eusebius the recognition of it kept extending, and it ranks with the other books of the New Testament in the Canon of the Third Council of Carthage, A.D. 397. In the fifth century it was universally acknowledged.

The critics of the present day, who supposed it to have been written in the name of St. James after his death, mostly belong to the Tübingen school. To what has been said in reply to them already in section 3, we may add that the silence about the controversy in respect of circumcision may indeed be accounted for by supposing that the Epistle was written after it had entirely ceased, as well as before it began. But if so, how late are we

to place it to suit their theory, according to which a serious struggle was carried on till the latter part of the second century? Most of its readers, impressed by the feeling of genuineness which it conveys, will not be ready to challenge the judgment of the Church.

6. *Analysis.*

i. 1. *The Greeting.*

2—18. *The subject of Trial (Temptation and Affliction).*

(a) 2—12. The joy, blessing, and reward of enduring trial. Trial to be accounted joy, as working endurance, which must have a perfect work, in order that ye may lack nothing, 2—4. One such lacking may be that of wisdom. Pray for it without wavering, 5—8. The circumstances of Christian life break down the differences of wealth and station. Under persecution and temptation the lowly who endures should rejoice in his spiritual exaltation, and the wealthy in his humiliation; thus both are brought to the common ground of obedience, 9—11. Blessing and reward of enduring, 12.

(b) 13—15. No one should yield to temptation on the plea that it comes from God.

(c) 16—18. Further refutation of this idea. All good is God's gift, and in Him is no change (so that He should send us what is evil), 16—17. Of his own will He begat us, by the (regenerating) word of truth to be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures, 18.

19—27. *Rules arising out of the preceding.*—To realise this dignity let every man be swift to hear . . . putting away filthiness . . . and welcoming the implanted word, 19—21; of which you must be doers and not hearers only, 22—25. Tests of reality. An unbridled tongue a proof of its absence. What pure religion is, 26—27.

ii. *Faith.*

1—13. *Faith in connection with respect of persons.*—Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, not to be held in company with respect of persons, 1. Illustration of such respect, 2—4. God makes choice of the poor whom ye dishonour, 5—6a. The treatment of you by the rich deprives them of a claim upon you, 6b—7. The right course is to obey the Royal Law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which is inconsistent with respect of person. For failure in one point (which this is) is breach of the whole law, 8—13.

14—26. *Necessity of the union of Faith and Works.*—Inutility of faith without works, 14—17. Reply to the speaker in the fourteenth verse, 18—19. The case of Abraham, 20—24; of Rahab, 25. Faith without works is dead, 26.

iii. *Wisdom.*

1—12. *Wisdom in reference to the conceit of it.*—Ambition to

become teachers is dangerous in case of stumbling, 1. One of the chief occasions is forwardness to speak. The man who stumbles not with his tongue is perfect, 2. The importance of it is not to be measured by its size. Bridles and rudders are instances of the power of small things, 3—4; so the tongue is small but boastful, 5*a*. Another instance is the great conflagration which is kindled by a little fire, 5*b*. The defiling and inflammatory character of the tongue, 6; which is less tameable than wild beasts, 7—8. The inconsistency of blessing God and cursing man is opposed to the analogy of natural things, as a fountain, fig-tree, and vine, 9—12.

13—18. *True Wisdom*.—The works of a good life done in the meekness of wisdom, are a proof of its presence, as jealousy and envy are of its absence, 13—14. These last are not the wisdom from above, the description of which follows, 15—18.

iv. *Carnal-mindedness and Presumption*.

1—10. *Source of their contentions*.—These come from fleshly pleasures, 1. Ye desire and strive to satisfy your wants by violence, which after all is in vain. Prayer would secure their supply, but not your prayer; because its aim is to spend the results on your pleasures, 2—3. This is (spiritual) adultery, forsaking God's friendship for the world, which His jealousy will not permit, 4—6. Exhortation to submission and change of life and feeling, 7—10.

11—12. *Against Presumption in slandering and judging*.—The man who judges his brother sets himself above the law (which forbids it), 11. There is only one law-giver and judge, 12.

13—17. *Carnal confidence*.—The forming of plans without reference to the uncertainty of life, 13—14; and to the will of God, 15; a presumption in which ye glory, 16—17.

v. *The Lord's Coming*.

1—6. *Against rich oppressors*.—The calamities coming on them, 1. The decay which attacks their treasures, 2—3. God hears the cry of the labourers whom they defraud, 4. Their luxury, injustice, and violence, while punishment is impending, 5—6.

7—18. *Encouragements and directions*.—Duty of patience till the Lord's coming, which is nigh, after the example of the husbandman who waits for the early and later rain, 7—8. Murmur not against one another—the judge stands before the door. Consider the example of the prophets, Job, and the end of the Lord, 9—11. Patience shown in forbearing to swear, 12. Affliction to be met with prayer, as cheerfulness is to be consecrated with songs of thanksgiving, 13. The healing of sickness to be sought in the ministry of the elders, and in mutual confession and prayer. Example of Elias.

19—20. *An urgent appeal to reclaim an erring brother*.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

1. *The Writer.*—The author of this Epistle is St. Peter. He belonged originally to Bethsaida, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. His name was Simon, or Simeon, Acts xv. 14; cf. 2 Pet. i. 1; and his father's Jonas (the Greek form of Jonah), Matt. xvi. 17, or John, John i. 42; xxi. 15—17 (Rev. Ver.). He received the name Cephas, an Aramaic word meaning "Rock," translated by the Greek "Petros," from our Lord when he was brought to Him by his brother Andrew, who was a disciple of John the Baptist, and heard his testimony to Jesus (John i. 36—43). Both of these became disciples of Christ (John ii. 2), but they were not at first permanently attached to Him, but continued their occupations of fishermen (cf. Matt. iv. 18—20; Mark i. 16). It was not until the miraculous draught of fishes (Luke v. 2—11) that they finally abandoned their trade.

It is unnecessary to go through St. Peter's history minutely. It will be enough to recall some of its incidents and the features of his character—his impetuous nature (Luke v. 8; John xviii. 10, xxi. 7); his forwardness in being the spokesman of his brethren, as in his refusal to quit Jesus (John vi. 68), in his confession of Him as the Christ (Matt. xvi. 15—16), and in his rebuke of Him when He foretold His sufferings, emphasized by the hand he laid on Him as he spoke (Matt. xvi. 22); the inconstancy and timidity which humbled his zealous confidence when he went to Jesus on the water (Matt. xiv. 28—31), and protested that he would never be offended in Him (Matt. xxvi. 33).

Along with the sons of Zebedee he was admitted to behold the raising of Jairus's daughter and the Transfiguration. It was their sympathy which our Lord sought during His agony in the garden. But Peter was distinguished beyond the other two. The name which Jesus gave him (John i. 42) was prophetic, and its significance was declared at the time of his confession. If the dignity of being the Rock on which the Church was to be built must be reserved for Him whom Peter had confessed, still his office of giving solidity to the Church is recognised in the words, "Thou

art Peter;" and his special responsibility in receiving the keys of the kingdom of heaven is then marked, as elsewhere (Matt. xviii. 18), the power of the Apostles collectively to loose and bind. Peter had been the leading disciple, and he was encouraged to continue to be so by our Lord's charge, "And do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32—Rev. Ver.).

Jesus appeared to him separately on the day of His resurrection (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5). What passed at that solemn meeting we are not told, but it must have been a reinstatement of Peter after his denial. And subsequently he received a commission once more, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep" (John xxi. 15—17).

Accordingly, we find him the chief figure in the early part of the history of the Church. It was his proposal to fill up the vacant place in the Apostolic College (Acts i. 15—26). He is the speaker on the Day of Pentecost (ii. 1—41), and again to the multitude after the healing of the lame man, and to the Council before which he and John were summoned in consequence of that miracle (iii. 1—iv. 22); and when all the Apostles were arrested (v. 29—32); and in the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira (v. 1—11). The sick were brought into the street that even his shadow might fall on them (v. 15). He and John were delegated by the Apostles to visit Samaria, where Philip had made many converts; and Simon asked him to sell the power of bestowing the Holy Ghost (viii. 14—24).

In the rest enjoyed by the Churches of Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria they were visited by him, his stay at Lydda being marked by the healing of Æneas, and at Joppa by his raising Dorcas to life (ix. 31—43). Here, too, he had the vision which prepared him for obeying the summons to Cæsarea from Cornelius, and for recognising without reserve the indication of God's will in the gift of the Holy Ghost to him and his household. "Can any man," he said, "forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (x. 1—48). He was not the first to admit a Gentile into the Church. Philip had not hesitated to baptize the eunuch without the authorization which Peter, it may be, would have needed (viii. 36—39). But the case of Cornelius was more important. The notice of the Church was called to it, and Peter had to defend his conduct on his return to Jerusalem. His plea was that he had followed God's guidance. And for the fact of the gift of the Holy Ghost to men uncircumcised he appealed to the testimony of the six brethren who accompanied him to Cæsarea, and whom he had prudently brought with him to Jerusalem. The Church

thankfully acquiesced in what had been done (xi. 1—18). But it was not followed up, and St. Peter's ministry was still directed to the circumcision (Gal. ii. 7, 8). The effect lay dormant.

The object of Paul's going to Jerusalem three years after his conversion was to visit Peter, but both he and James suspected him of wishing to acquaint himself with the affairs of the Church in order to betray it to the rulers of the Jews, till Barnabas overcame their doubt (Acts ix. 26—30; Gal. i. 18—24).

The next event was his deliverance by the angel from prison and the death which Herod designed for him, after which "he departed and went into another place" (Acts xii. 1—17). We do not know how he was employed in the interval between this and the Council held at Jerusalem after St. Paul's first apostolical journey. A comparison of Acts xv. 6—29, with Gal. ii. 1—10, shows not only the hearty support received by St. Paul on that occasion from James, Peter, and John, which he had taken pains to secure, but the wisdom with which all the proceedings were conducted. There was a party consisting of men who had been Pharisees which insisted on the necessity of circumcision and the keeping of the law on the part of the Gentiles admitted into the Church. The matter was discussed by speakers on both sides. Then Peter arose, and referring to his own history in connection with Cornelius, said that the question was one which God had Himself decided "a good while ago." He appealed to them not to lay a yoke on the Gentiles which they themselves were unable to bear; and reminded them that both Jews and Gentiles had one and the same hope of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. His words produced a silence. Barnabas and Paul followed, not discussing the matter on its merits, which might have had an exasperating effect, but describing the approval which God had given them in the miracles which He wrought by them among the heathen. Then James spoke, treating Peter's reference to Cornelius as decisive, and showing that this was in agreement with the teaching of the Prophets. He ended by giving his decision not to "trouble" the Gentiles, but to call on them to abstain from certain things which, with the exception of fornication, were not matters of necessity, but of policy. This council was held *circa* A.D. 52, and there is no further mention of St. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles.

Not long afterwards he went to Antioch. At first he conformed to the practice of that Church, and ate with the Gentiles. But certain men came there from James. The expression seems to imply that they had some kind of commission from him. Many members of the Church of Jerusalem were likely to have less wisdom and liberality than its head, and these men seem to have

imitated the conduct of others of their brethren on a previous occasion (Acts xv. 1—24), expressing disapproval of what they witnessed. Peter, out of fear of them, separated himself from the Gentiles, as did all the other Jewish members of the Church of Antioch, and even Barnabas. St. Paul speaks of their "hypocrisy," as acting in opposition to their own convictions. And he charged Peter with his inconsistency in the presence of them all. "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. ii. 10—14). He does not tell us the effect of his rebuke, but we can hardly doubt that it was successful, for Peter had acted against his own principles. "He stood condemned" (Rev. Ver.).

It was not the first instance of his yielding to fear, nor of his swift repentance. In his legendary history these traits continue to the end. Yielding to the entreaties of the faithful at Rome to flee from the death which threatened him, he was said to have left the city. He met the Saviour on the Appian Way bearing His cross. "Lord, whither goest thou?" he said. The answer was, "To Rome, to be crucified again." Peter turned, went back weeping, and faced his death. The scene of the story was formerly marked by the church of *Sancta Maria ad passus*, but now by one which is called *Domine, quo vadis?* St. Paul mentions him again as regarded by a party in the Corinthian Church as their head (1 Cor. i. 12; cf. iii. 22); and as commonly accompanied in his journeys by his wife (1 Cor. ix. 5).

The rest of his history is uncertain, except that we may feel sure that the division of labour described in Gal. ii. 7—9, by which it was arranged that Paul should go to the Gentiles and Peter and the others to the circumcision, was in the main respected. What light is to be derived from 1 Pet. v. 13, will be seen below. We are left to traditional accounts which are to some extent untrustworthy. According to the statement commonly received in old times, he was Bishop of Antioch for five years. This is not credible if we consider the origin and character of that Church (Acts xi. 19—26; xiii. 1—3; xv. 1—2). It appears to have been suggested by his visit mentioned by St. Paul in the Galatians. After that he was said to have preached to the Jews, to whom he writes in this epistle (Euseb. E. H. iii. 1); but it contains no signs of his being known to them personally.

The Church of Corinth also seems to have claimed him as a joint founder with St. Paul, according to the letter of its Bishop Dionysius, which he wrote to the Romans in the time of their Bishop Soter, A.D. 168—176 (Euseb. E. H. ii. 26). This may be derived from 1 Cor. i. 10; and he could not have had a hand in

founding the Church, of which St. Paul was the spiritual father (1 Cor. iv. 5). Yet the memory of a residence of his at Corinth may have been preserved in that Church. But Rome was said to have been the chief scene of his labours. He went there in the second year of Claudius to oppose Simon Magus, who had turned heresiarch, and became the first bishop, holding the see during the last twenty-five years of his life. The story of his contest with Simon Magus at Rome is derived by Eusebius (E. H. ii. 15) from Justin Martyr. The probable origin of it was shown in a remarkable way. Justin had appealed, for the proof of Simon's visit to the capital and his powers of imposture, to the fact that a statue dedicated to him as a god, *Simoni Deo Sancto*, was to be seen in the island of the Tiber. Here, in 1574, a statue was discovered bearing the name of the Sabine deity, *Semo Sancus*. St. Peter's foundation of the Roman Church and long episcopate are inconsistent with what we know from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the account in the Acts of the Apostles of his first imprisonment. Strictly speaking, neither St. Paul nor St. Peter founded that Church, whose origin is unknown. But St. Paul's influence was so great that he might be called one of its founders; and if St. Peter spent any time there, there would be good reason for speaking of him in the same way.

The account of St. Peter's death in its fullest form was that he suffered at Rome under Nero on the same day with St. Paul, being crucified with his head downwards (the first authority for this is Origen in Euseb. E. H. iii. 1), obtaining this favour as unworthy of the position in which his Master died. St. Paul, on the other hand, was beheaded as a Roman citizen. The tradition was expressed in the Mediæval couplet:—

“ Ense coronatur Paulus, cruce Petrus, eodem
Sub duce, luce, loco; dux Nero, Roma locus.”

The manner of his death is alluded to in John xxi. 18, and Clement, who was Bishop of Rome, in the letter which he wrote to the Corinthians about the end of the first century, gives early testimony to his martyrdom. There is no good reason for rejecting the tradition that it took place at Rome, though some of the circumstances may be picturesque additions. From the middle of the second century onwards this was the account universally received, and it would seem to have been handed on by the earlier age. There is no trace of any other place having claimed to be the scene of his death, whereas Caius, a Roman presbyter, writing just after the end of the second century, speaks of being able to point to the “trophies” of the two Apostles, which must mean some kind of monument, one on the Vatican, the other on the road to Ostia.

There is no complete proof of St. Peter ever having been at Rome. But a personal relation on his part to that Church is implied at as early a date as that of Ignatius's letter to it, *circa* 107, in chap. iv. And there must have been some ground for a tradition which was undisputed in antiquity. It has been conjectured that the part claimed for St. Peter as well as St. Paul in the foundation of the Roman Church is to be explained by the supposed existence of two churches side by side, the one Gentile, and the other Jewish, the latter being formed of such as withdrew after St. Paul's arrival (cf. Phil. i. 15—18, with Col. iv. 11); and that these Churches stood in a near relation to St. Paul and St. Peter respectively. The harmony between the two Apostles would tend in the direction of reunion, which was completed before the end of the century in the time of Clement.

2. *To whom Written.*—The Epistle is addressed to “the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (Rev. Ver.). This would prepare us for finding that Jewish Christians are alone contemplated. But as the Churches in three, at least, of these countries were mainly founded by St. Paul, the Jewish element must have been the smaller; and it seems unlikely that St. Peter would address one portion of them only. And, in fact, passages such as ii. 9—10; iv. 2—4, according to the Revised Version (cf. i. 14, 18; iii. 6) are more applicable to Christians of Gentile origin. St. Peter regards these converts as adopted into the true Israel, and includes them in the sojourners of the Dispersion. It is plain from his beseeching them “as strangers and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts” (ii. 11) that the position of all God's servants on earth, and absent from their true home, is in his mind (cf. Ps. xxxix. 12; cxix. 19).

In his exhortations against heathen vices (ii. 11, 16), retaliation and reviling (iii. 8—12), and the love of gain and power on the part of the elders (v. 2—3), he may have aimed at faults among them which had come to his knowledge. Another motive was their encouragement under the trials to which they were exposed, and to fortify them against the severer persecution which was impending. A third purpose is hinted at rather than fully expressed: “I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand” (v. 12). The exhortations meet us everywhere. The testimony seems confined to this passage, while its importance is marked by its place at the end. He wished, apparently, to dissociate himself from sympathy with Judaizers, and to express his agreement with St. Paul. These Churches were not of his own planting, and he wished to give his witness to the truth of the teaching which they had received from his brother Apostle, in the

letter which he sent by Silvanus, his fellow-worker in those very regions.

It is in keeping with the modesty with which this purpose is intimated that, in addressing the elders, he simply styles himself their "fellow-elder" (v. 1), and that the whole of the personal allusions to himself are contained in that same verse.

It has been assumed that Silvanus (v. 12) is the same as Silas, one of the two members of the Church of Jerusalem who were sent to Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas as independent witnesses to the decision of the Council (Acts xv. 22—35), and who was St. Paul's companion in his second apostolical journey (Acts xv. 40—xviii. 5). His name has here the same form as St. Paul uses (1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 19), of which the other is an abbreviation. The mention of him as "our faithful brother as I account *him*" (Rev. Ver.), cannot have been intended to hint the slightest degree of doubt, but expressed in a delicate manner the agreement of the writer's estimate with that which he knew to exist in the minds of his readers.

The salutation sent from "Marcus, my son" (v. 13) may be, as some think, that of a son of the Apostle of whom we read nowhere else. But it is more likely that the term of affection implies one who was as a son to him, and that John Mark is meant, to whose mother's house St. Peter went when released from the prison (Acts xii. 12). He was cousin or nephew of Barnabas (Col. iv. 10), and started with St. Paul and him on their first apostolical journey, but left them at Perga, in Pamphylia (Acts xiii. 13). St. Paul's refusal to take him in the next journey caused a breach of friendship between him and Barnabas (Acts xv. 38—39); but many years afterwards we find St. Paul anxious for his society (2 Tim. iv. 11). According to Papias and Clement of Alexandria, he was also closely connected with St. Peter as his follower (Euseb. E. H. ii. 15) and "interpreter" (iii. 39); by which was meant that St. Mark's Gospel was the record of what he had heard from the Apostle.

The idea that the Mark here mentioned was St. Peter's own son is connected with the salutation immediately preceding. The Revised Version aims at giving the ambiguity of the original, "She that is in Babylon elect together with *you* saluteth you." If this be an elect sister it must be Peter's wife. But in this case the mode of expression is unnatural. There can be little doubt that the Syriac and Vulgate are right in understanding it of the Church in Babylon.

3. *Date and Place of Writing.*—The fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, probably marks the time before which the Epistle was written, for after that break-up of the home of the Jewish race the term "dispersion" (i. 1) would lose much of its meaning. But the

precise date cannot be fixed. The mention of persecution only helps us to a certain degree. The circumstances of these Christians of Asia Minor were those of unpopularity and ill-treatment; but the trial was not severe as yet, though it was about to become so. It was this unpopularity of the Christians at Rome which tempted Nero to turn aside from himself on to them the suspicion of having set fire to the city. St. Peter may have written in the foresight of what was coming, though there had been no example as yet on a great scale. In this case, we may place the writing of the Epistle a short time before the Neronian persecution in A.D. 64. On the other hand, though there is no evidence that this persecution extended to the provinces, it is likely that the example set at Rome would not be forgotten. And St. Peter may have had in view the approach of persecution resulting from it.

The mention of Mark is some guide to us. He was with St. Paul at Rome during his first imprisonment, A.D. 61—63, but was about to go into Asia Minor (Col. iv. 10). Some years later, during his second imprisonment (*circa* 67 or 68), the Apostle wished Timothy to bring him when he came to him (2 Tim. iv. 11). In this interval we may place Mark's visit to Peter (v. 13) and the writing of the Epistle. And it cannot be later if we adopt the traditional account of his death. But those who do not feel themselves bound by it, and who think that he could not have written to Churches in which St. Paul's authority was chiefly recognised during his lifetime, refer it to some time later than his death.

St. Peter wrote from Babylon (v. 12), but it has been a matter of dispute whether the old capital of the Chaldeans is meant, which, though ruined and going to complete decay, still contained a large population, in which there were many Jews; or whether Rome is intended, the mystical Babylon, an interpretation as old as Papias (Euseb. E. H. ii. 15). There is no doubt that this is the meaning in Rev. xiv. 8; xvi. 19 *al.* But such a use of the word is as suitable to the character of that book as it seems unsuitable here. But whether St. Peter's presence so far to the East was only a visit, or belonged to a residence of greater length, we are unable to determine.

4. *Style and Character.*—The topics follow each other in no premeditated order, and the successive thoughts belonging to them often seem suggested by the one next before. But the whole form of the Epistle has a great likeness to those of St. Paul. We see it in the greeting at the beginning, followed by an introductory passage of some length (i. 3—12), in the salutation at the end, and the doxologies (iv. 11; v. 11). But the similarity does not stop here. The phraseology is frequently

that of St. Paul. And there can be little doubt that some passages are quotations from his writings or influenced by a recollection of them. This is particularly the case in regard to the Epistle to the Romans. Compare ii. 6—7, Romans ix. 33, where there are the same departures from the LXX. in quoting two passages of Isaiah; i. 14, Rom. xii. 2; ii. 2, Rom. xii. 1; ii. 13—14, Rom. xiii. 1—5; iv. 1—2, Rom. vi. 7 *sqq.*; iv. 10—11, Rom. xii. 6—8. Compare also ii. 16, Gal. v. 13; v. 12, 1 Cor. xv. 1. It may be, though this is less clear, that an acquaintance is shown with Epistles of St. Paul written during his first imprisonment, cf. i. 10—12, Eph. iii. 9—11; iii. 22, Eph. i. 20—22; ii. 4—6, Eph. ii. 20—22; iii. 4, Eph. iii. 16; iii. 19—20, Eph. iv. 8—10; or even later, if iii. 3 is connected with 1 Tim. ii. 9.

There are coincidences of expression also with the Epistle of James, cf. i. 6—7, James i. 3; ii. 1, James i. 21; ii. 11, James iv. 1; iii. 14, iv. 14, James i. 12, 25; iv. 8, James v. 12; v. 6, James iv. 10. And there are three quotations common to both: Isa. xl. 6—8. in i. 24, James i. 10—11; Prov. iii. 34, in v. 5, James iv. 6; Prov. x. 12, in iv. 8, James v. 20. In the last instance there is the same abandonment of the LXX. for a rendering in accordance with the Hebrew. This list of references would be very largely increased if we were to point out the influence of our Lord's words preserved both in the synoptical Gospels and St. John. But it is worth while to notice resemblances between the Epistle and St. Peter's speeches in the Acts of the Apostles, cf. i. 17, Acts x. 34; i. 20, Acts ii. 23, iii. 18; i. 21, Acts ii. 32—36; iii. 15, iv. 10; ii. 4, Acts iv. 11; ii. 8, Acts i. 16, cf. 25; iii. 18, Acts iii. 14.

We might expect to find the Apostle's language deeply coloured by the Old Testament and the words of our Lord. And it is interesting to notice how far that source of influence extends. Thus, we might at first sight be disposed to derive the expression, "that they may be gained" (iii. 1) from 1 Cor. ix. 19—20; but our Lord's words (Matt. xviii. 15) are the original source in both cases. But the familiarity shown by St. Peter with the thoughts and words of St. Paul comes on us as a surprise. We must remember that he was the great letter-writer as well as the great teacher. In the enforcing of what was contained in his Gospel, as he termed it (Rom. ii. 16; xvi. 25), he moulded to a great degree the language of the Church while directing its thought. St. Peter had a personal acquaintance with him, in which the mind of St. Paul could not fail to impress itself on him. Thus, while we seem to be able to trace in St. Peter's writings his acquaintance with his colleagues James and John, the influence of St. Paul comes next to that of our Lord. But

he does not merely echo him. He has his own mode of presenting doctrine, his own words, and his own grammatical peculiarities.

In accordance with his desire to give encouragement under trial, he turns to the future in hope (i. 3—5, 13; iii. 9; v. 1, 4, 10, 11). His doctrinal teaching is subordinate to his practical purpose. But it is much fuller than St. James's, as we might expect from his position midway between him and St. Paul. We meet with the office of each person in the Trinity (i. 1), and the power of the Spirit (i. 12, 22). He enters more into the work of our Lord, through whom God receives His glory (iv. 11), and we our call (v. 10). He speaks of his sufferings (v. 1) in connection with their example (ii. 21—23), and their power of cleansing and reconciling (i. 1; ii. 24, 25; iii. 18; iv. 1); of His Resurrection, which is the source of belief (i. 21), and of regeneration (i. 3, 23; iii. 21); of His Ascension, and the subjection of the angels to Him (iii. 22). He does not mention the Law, and his spiritual conception of the Church is seen in ii. 5—9, and of baptism in iii. 21. And yet the treatment and expression in these points is not the same as St. Paul's, and the characteristic teaching about justification does not occur.

The Old Testament is frequently quoted, but we do not find in it what we read about the prophets in i. 10—12. And we learn through St. Peter alone the interest taken by the angels in the Gospel (i. 12), but cf. Eph. iii. 10, and our Lord's preaching to the spirits in prison (iii. 19).

5. *Authenticity*.—This was undisputed in antiquity. It was among the books universally received. The first allusion to it is in 2 Peter iii. 1. It is repeatedly quoted by Polycarp—the great link between the apostolic age and the one which followed it—in his Epistle to the Philippians. He does not name it. But this is done more than once by Irenæus, and by Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen. It is not mentioned in the Muratorian Canon, which admits of explanation; but it was included in the old Latin and Syriac versions.

In modern times it has been called in question, on the ground of the want of originality which is seen in the use of other men's writings—a thing unworthy of an Apostle—and the absence of such a distinct individuality as would befit St. Peter. These points have been dealt with above. A relative originality is apparent in it, though not an absolute one. It is said, also, that the characteristics of the persecution agree best with that which was carried on in Trajan's time, of which we read in the correspondence between Pliny, when he was Governor of Bithynia, *circa* A.D. 112, and the Emperor (Pliny's Letters, x. 97, 98). But the time of Trajan is not so suitable as that of Nero, or one near

it. The Christians were not obliged to defend themselves before the magistrates, but were merely to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asked a reason of the hope that was in them (iii. 15); so that suffering on account of being a Christian was connected with the general dislike of them (see Tacitus, Ann. xv. 44). And we see no trace in the Epistle of the success of the Gospel which brought on the persecution in Bithynia, where the temples had been almost deserted, and there was no longer a sale for animals for the purpose of sacrifice.

The theory of those who refer the Epistle to this date is that it was written by an adherent of St. Paul, who had also a leaning towards St. Peter, to Churches in which attachment to the latter was prevalent, in order to cheer them under their persecution; and that to do this successfully he assumed the name of Peter, and dropped the most distinctive points in Paul's teaching. Or else the contrary is supposed, that the writer was of Peter's school, and adopted much of Paul's doctrine to recommend his letter to those who would otherwise not have paid attention to it.

It seems safer to remain content with the strong external testimony on the one hand, and on the other to recognise in St. Peter himself the union of those elements of thought which, as these conjectures admit, must have belonged to him. And it is not a matter of sentiment, but strictly belongs to the argument, to mention the power exercised by the Epistle on a devout reader. Those who are acquainted with the practical commentary upon it of Archbishop Leighton know the stores of wisdom and strength which it contains. This is more easily understood if it be a genuine work, than on the supposition that it was composed by any one, however able or well-intentioned, who made use of another man's name.

6. *Analysis.*

i. 1—2. *Salutation.*

3—12. *Introduction.*—13—ii. 10. *A Group of General Exhortations.*—(ii. 4—10 is not strictly hortatory, but enforces the preceding passage.)

ii. 11—iv. 19. *A second Group of Exhortations relative to their Position in the Presence of the Gentiles.*

(a) Relating to the influence of Christian example as observed by the heathen, ii. 11—iii. 12.

(b) Prescribing a line of conduct under their insults, ill-treatment, dissolute life, and active enmity, iii. 13—iv. 19.

v. 1—9. *Exhortations to particular Classes and the whole Body.*

10—11. *A Promise that God will perfect them, ending with a Doxology.*

12—14. *Conclusion.*

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

1. *Relation to 1 Peter and Jude.*—The writer in the first Epistle is “Peter, an Apostle of Jesus.” He styles himself here “Simon” (or “Symeon,” cf. Acts xv. 14) “Peter, a Servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ.” From the reference in iii. 1 to 1 Peter, it appears that the readers are the same in both cases, though they are not here spoken of as belonging to the Dispersion in Asia Minor. But the address takes in others. It is quite general, “to them that have obtained like precious faith with us.” This may mean the whole body of Jewish Christians outside Judea who had received the same privileges as himself and his brother Apostles, with the other members of the Church of Jerusalem. But from the absence of that which applies peculiarly to Jewish believers it would seem that the Gentiles, who were very much in St. Peter’s thoughts before, are now distinctly regarded as occupying the same position as the Jewish Church at large. So this is a strictly Catholic Epistle.

Its object, as stated in iii. 17—18, is to promote their steadfastness by warning them of danger which threatened faith and practice, and to urge them to seek a fuller knowledge of God and Jesus Christ (cf. i. 2—3, 8). It is not, then, the same as in 1 Peter. There is no mention of danger from without in the shape of persecution, but from the encouragement to evil living given by false teachers (ii.), and disbelief of the Lord’s coming (iii.).

Its style differs considerably from that of the earlier Epistle, a fact which, as St. Jerome tells us, weighed with those who rejected it, and which he accounted for by supposing that different “interpreters” or secretaries were employed. It has a greater unity of thought. It is more elegant, and comes nearer to having a Greek air about it. A charge has even been made recently, but without success, of an absurd affectation of fine writing. On the other hand, many resemblances between the two Epistles have been pointed out, to appreciate which they must be compared in the original.

Quotations from the Old Testament, which are numerous in 1 Peter, are rare here. Besides the historical references in chaps. ii. and iii., the only use of it is in iii. 8, Psalm xc. 4; iii. 13, Isaiah lxxv. 17; and ii. 22, Prov. xxvi. 11, where the parallelism is completed by the Apostle or some earlier writer. The daily vexation of Lot is not contained in the narrative of Genesis, nor the great noise with which the heavens will pass away (iii. 10) in our Lord's words (Matt. xxiv. 35). And the part which fire is to play in the destruction of the earth, *canente David et Sibylla*, is not found in the Psalms, nor was it a point of Jewish belief. Its presence in the Sibylline Oracles, part of the Christian additions which they received, and in Justin, Apol. ii. 7, both rest ultimately, it has been urged, on the teaching of this Epistle (iii. 10—12).

The likeness of a part of it to Jude is obvious. There can be no doubt that one of the writers is indebted to the other. The question as to the priority has been differently answered. But the fact that there is greater vigour, symmetry, and consistency in Jude gives his Epistle the look of originality. And in some places it supplies the key to St. Peter's meaning. Thus, while in Jude 6 the allusion is not clear, but has been explained by the Jewish interpretation of Genesis vi. 1—2, it is less apparent in 2 Peter ii. 4. Without Jude 9 (for the source of which see the chapter on that Epistle) we should not understand what 2 Peter iii. 11 refers to. The chief argument for the earlier date of 2 Peter is that it foretells the coming of those whom St. Jude describes from experience in a way answering to the prophecy. The common opinion, however, is that St. Peter had read Jude's Epistle. But still his use of it is free and independent. It abandons its language suddenly, applies it differently, adds, abridges, and expands. He does not follow Jude fully in his use of traditional views or apocryphal books in the passages already referred to, and he omits all mention of the Book of Enoch (Jude 14—15). He makes additions suitable to his argument in ii. 5, 6—9, 16, 19—22; and founds a great part of iii. on Jude 18.

His readiness to employ the words and thoughts of others in his own way meets us in 1 Peter, though in a less striking manner. It is not an improbable suggestion that St. Jude's Epistle, whether directly communicated to him or not, produced a deep impression on him, partly by its vivid description of existing mischief, and partly by the proof it gave of more than had come under his own notice. This deepened sense of danger to the Church impelled him to do what his position called for while he had time (i. 12—15).

2. *Authenticity.*—The peculiar position of the Epistle in regard to external testimony requires a somewhat full notice. In the

list which Eusebius gives of the Books of the New Testament in the first part of the fourth century (E. H., iii. 25), he states that the greater part were generally received. He calls others of them "controverted but well-known and recognised by most." These are Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and the Apocalypse. But this distinction soon disappears, and we have other lists belonging to the same century either identical with our own, as that of Athanasius, Epiphanius, Jerome, Rufinus, and Augustine, or almost so, as that of Cyril of Jerusalem, in which the Apocalypse is omitted. To the same age belongs the earliest judgment on the subject by Councils of the Church. The Acts of the Council of Laodicea in Phrygia, A.D. 363, contain a list of canonical books which is the same as Cyril's. Its genuineness is doubtful. But no doubt attaches to the Canon of Scripture as recognised by the Third Council of Carthage, A.D. 397, which agrees entirely with that which we inherit. Neither these Councils nor the writers just mentioned professed to do more than record the testimony of the earlier periods as it had come down to them. After this only reminiscences appear from time to time of the doubts entertained as to parts of the Canon, chiefly in those particular regions in which they were once unknown.

(i.) The ground on which a book was acknowledged to be canonical was its having for its author an Apostle or apostolic man. This was a matter on which the Church of the earliest age was able to pronounce. Existing as it did before the writing of any of the books of the New Testament, they were successively entrusted to its recognition and care, under the guidance of Divine providence, as "the Keeper and Witness of Holy Writ." But the knowledge of them was not everywhere complete at the same time.

In the case of the Epistles the Churches to which they were originally written cherished them from the first, and became centres from which the knowledge of them spread. But it took time and intercommunication between the widely-separated communities, in an age when such intercourse was more difficult than it is now, before the whole Church became familiar with all its possessions of this kind, and distinct in the enumeration of them. This result was helped on by conflicts with heresies, and above all by the demand made by order of Diocletian upon the Christians to surrender the Scriptures in order that they might be destroyed. This persecution, carried on in the early years of the fourth century, directed the attention of all to the practical question as to which books, within the whole range of Christian literature, were or were not Scripture.

The full expression of agreement on this point belongs, as we

have seen, to that period. It was not the effect of any corporate act of the whole Church, but an agreement still found in the pages of the leading writers, as to what had been held from the first. We cannot recover the whole process by which it was attained. The entire evidence which was relied on has not reached us; but it is instructive to trace the separate lines of testimony supplied by the earlier periods, such as quotations in orthodox and heretical writings, and the admission or exclusion of certain books from the most ancient versions. These sources, from the character of the literature of the two first centuries and the fragmentary condition in which it has descended to us, must be imperfect. And yet the information actually supplied is remarkable.

This is true not only of the undisputed, but, in a less degree, of the controverted books. But the Second Epistle of Peter has the least amount of this kind of support. There is no undoubted trace of it in Church writers before Origen, who wrote in the first part of the third century. His words are preserved in Eusebius (E. H., vi. 25): "Peter again, on whom the Church of Christ is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, has left behind an Epistle generally acknowledged, perhaps also a second, for it is a disputed question." There is additional mention of it in his writings, and even quotations from it, but as they are only in the Latin version of Rufinus, who was in the habit of supplementing his author's text, they are not to be trusted. Again, in the interval between Origen and Eusebius, no reference to it is found except one which is implied in the words of Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and a disciple of Origen, in a letter which he wrote to St. Cyprian, A.D. 256. Nor did it form part of the old Syriac version, nor of the old Latin. There is no mention of it in the Muratorian Canon, but this is true also of 1 Peter, about which there was no doubt.

Thus it must be admitted that the evidence for it in detail is extremely small. Still the fact remains that the Church, which had been in no hurry to recognise it or the other disputed books, ultimately pronounced in its favour, as it did in theirs. But there is one point which must not be passed over. It is hard to explain how a writing proceeding from one in the position of St. Peter could have failed to find immediate and universal acceptance. Our wonder is lessened to some extent by the few signs of acquaintance with the first Epistle, which appear for a long time in one quarter. "It must be noticed that the actual traces of the early use of 1 Peter in the Latin churches are very scanty. There is not the least evidence to show that its authority was ever

disputed; but, on the other hand, it does not seem to have been much read. The Epistle is not mentioned in the Muratorian Canon, though no stress can be laid on that fact. It is more strange that Tertullian quotes it only twice, and that, too, in writings which are more or less open to suspicion." (Westcott. "Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament," p. 260, *n.*) Even on the supposition of its not being genuine, the obscurity of 2 Peter is perplexing. We might have expected to have found it denounced. It is clear that we are not acquainted with all the circumstances.

(ii.) Internal difficulties operated in some degree against it. We have seen what Jerome said about the effect of the difference of style in the two Epistles. And we learn from him that the authority of Jude was questioned on account of its use of Apocryphal writings. This would be likely in a degree to affect the reception of this Epistle. Objections to it of this nature have had great influence in modern times. It contains an accumulation of points open to criticism. An anxiety on the part of the writer to be recognised as an Apostle has been detected, contrasting with the modesty of the earlier letter. It may be replied that the Apostle's aim now was to speak out in his own name, and to use the authority which he had, while the other tone was in agreement with his purpose there.

It has been said that St. Peter's life does not allow for an interval between the Epistles long enough for the rise of a new set of circumstances completely changing his aim. But spiritual evils are often of rapid growth, and noticed in their early stages by those whose duty it is to be on the watch. A mark of later date is seen in the term "holy mount" applied to the scene of the transfiguration (i. 18), as if it were a recognised name for it to the prejudice of Mount Zion. But it seems to imply no more than that the readers were acquainted with the event referred to. And the confining of the apostolic witness to that one incident in our Lord's life, to the omission of His passion and resurrection dwelt on in 1 Peter, is taken as showing a want of the sense of proportion not to be expected in one of His companions. Yet it is in keeping with the view of the whole Epistle. The first coming of the Lord was not denied by the scoffers. It is His "eternal kingdom" into which St. Peter incites his readers to secure an entrance (i. 11). He assures them of the power of Jesus Christ, and His coming in glory by his testimony to the sight of His majesty which had been granted beforehand to him and the two other Apostles. Again St. Paul's Epistles are placed, perhaps with other contemporary writings, in the same rank apparently as the Scriptures of the Old Testament (iii. 16). It is

not what we should look for in St. Peter's time. But the difficulty disappears on reflection.

The writings of the Apostles were originally subordinate to their spoken words. Their witness to the facts and meaning of the Lord's life was delivered by them in person. The circumstances which drew letters from them were only occasional. But they would not have allowed, on the one hand, that their record about the Lord was inferior in importance or authority to the Old Testament; nor that what they wrote was to be less regarded than what they said. Hence there is no reason to see here a trace of the peculiar reverence paid at a later time to the writings of St. Paul and the other Apostles, when their voice was silent; nor to look upon the respect actually claimed for them as an anachronism.

(iii.) The appeal to internal characteristics may be made also on the other side. If St. Peter was not the author, we have before us the work of a forger. But if so, he must have been an artless one, for he has not taken the pains to make his writing conform to the model of the First Epistle in several minor points in which we might have expected it. The spirit of the writer is admitted to be one which befitted the Apostle. This is against the probability of deceit. In writers of a different stamp, and of a later age than that to which the Epistle professes to belong, pious fraud is more intelligible. And if it is a forgery, it stands quite by itself.

Its apostolic tone not only separates it from the mass of spurious books, but from Barnabas or the Shepherd of Hermas, and even from Ignatius and Clement. The character of the false teaching spoken of suits no age so well as that of the Apostles. It was in the undeveloped state of which we find mention in the Colossians and the Pastoral Epistles. It is hard to see how the language which is used would have suited the purpose of one who had in view any full-grown form of heresy. He would almost certainly have given clearer indications of the nature of those errors which he wishes to condemn with the authority of St. Peter. But it may be well to repeat that the consent of the Church is firm ground. The discussion of internal evidence, on one side or the other, gives us a less trustworthy footing.

3. *Analysis.*

(i.) 1—2. *Greeting.*

3—11. *Exhortations.*—To meet the bounty of God by diligence in rising through a sevenfold series from faith to charity, 3—7; in order to avoid unfruitfulness and blindness, and to secure an entrance into the eternal kingdom of Christ Jesus, 8—11.

12—15. *Personal Reasons for writing the Epistle.*

16—21. *Grounds for expecting the Lord's coming.*—His majesty witnessed beforehand by the Apostle on the Mount, 16—18 the teaching of prophecy, 19—21.

(ii.) 1—22. *False Teachers to be expected ; their punishment.*—There shall be false teachers among them, as there were false prophets in Israel, 1—3 ; God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the ungodly under punishment till the day of judgment ; as shown by the example of Noah and Lot, on the one hand, and by that of the sinful angels and Sodom and Gomorrha, on the other, 4—10. Description of these teachers (so far as they have already made their appearance), 11—16 ; their influence, 17—22.

(iii.) 1—10. *The Lord's coming defended against Scoffers.* The aim of this and the former Epistle is to remind them of the words of the prophets and the Lord, 1—2. Scoffers will come deriding their expectation of Him, 3—4. They wilfully forget that God, who once destroyed the earth by water, will do so again by fire, 5—7. His delay is long-suffering, 8—9 ; but He will come, and suddenly, 10.

11—18. *Concluding Exhortations, including mention of St. Paul's Epistles. Doxology.*

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

1. *Authorship*.—The seventh and last of the so-called Catholic Epistles claims (verse 1) to be the work of “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” Of the several persons in the New Testament bearing the name of Jude only two can be said in any way to answer to this description of our writer, viz.:—

(i.) “Jude of James,” a member of the band of Apostles, Luke vi. 16; Acts i. 13; John xiv. 22. This phrase is translated by a somewhat unusual method in the Authorised Version, “Jude, *the brother* of James,” in order to make the title agree with that by which the writer of this Epistle definitely names himself; but the ordinary significance of this form of expression in Greek demands rather the translation, “Jude, *the son* of James,” as it is rendered in the Peshito Version, and by Tyndale, Cranmer, Luther, and most modern critics; and indeed in the case of the other Apostles so described, the ellipse is thus supplied in the Authorised Version, *e.g.* “James, *the son* of Alphæus.”

The twelve members of the Apostolic body in all the lists (Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 14; Acts i. 13) fall into three groups of four. In the first two lists the name “Jude of James” does not occur, but its place is represented by the name “Thaddæus,” in consequence of which “Jude of James” has been identified with Thaddæus, who was—according to some MSS. of the Greek Testament, followed by Jerome—also called Lebbæus.

Also, since in all four lists of the Apostles, James, the son of Alphæus, is the first name of the group in which the member Thaddæus or Jude of James is also always placed, it has been generally thought that this James is the father intended in the title, Jude the son of James.

This Jude, therefore, was—(a) an Apostle; (b) also called Thaddæus; (c) the son of James the Little and grandson of Alphæus.

(ii.) Jude, the brother of the Lord, mentioned in Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3, together with a brother named James.

These two men have been by some critics regarded as one and the same person.

According to this supposition Jude is *the brother* of James, he and James being both sons of Alphæus; Alphæus is the same as Clopas, the husband of a Mary (Mark xv. 40; John xix. 25), who is regarded as the sister of the Virgin Mary, so that Jude and James would be the cousins (in Greek "brethren") of our Lord, and agree with the names recorded in Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.

Against this view, however, are the two facts—first that, as already stated, it is unusual to interpret the Greek phrase, "Jude of James," in any other manner than "Jude, *the son* of James;" next, that it is distinctly remarked in John vii. 5, that our Lord's brethren did not believe in Him, and therefore it is impossible that they could have been among the Apostles; and indeed from Acts i. 13, 14, it is clear that they were distinguished from the Apostles after their conversion. It would seem safer, therefore, to regard "Jude of James," or Thaddæus, the Apostle, as one person, and Jude, the brother of the Lord, as another distinct from him.

If this be the case, which of the two may we more probably regard as the author of the Epistle?

The writer styles himself (verse 1) "the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James," from which it would appear; first, that he was not Jude, *the son* of James, the Apostle; next, that he was not an Apostle at all, or he would have mentioned the fact in the usual manner (as St. Paul in the first verse of almost all his Epistles, and St. Peter in the opening of his two letters), and by identifying himself as an Apostle of Jesus Christ he would not have been obliged to fix his personality by the description "brother of James."

In accordance with this conclusion is the fact that nowhere in his Epistle does the writer speak as an Apostle, but perhaps rather as one outside the Apostolic body, *e.g.* in verse 17, "Remember ye the words which *were spoken before* of the Apostles." And the absence of the Epistle in the Peshito (Syriac) Version of the New Testament may perhaps also be taken as a sign that it was not the work of the Apostle Jude Thaddæus, to whom tradition assigns the foundation of the Syrian Church of Edessa.

For these reasons, therefore, the writer would appear to have been Jude, the brother of the Lord and of James, who had probably been converted to the faith after the Lord's resurrection (see Acts i. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5). If so, his brother James must have been a well-known person at the time, from the introduction of the relationship in the opening words of the letter, and he was therefore perhaps the James who was the first Bishop

of Jerusalem (Acts xii. 17; xv. 13, 19; xxvi. 18; Gal. ii. 9, 12), and possibly the author of the Epistle bearing that name.

Against the identification of our author with the brother of the Lord, and in favour of the writer's being the Apostle Jude, it has been alleged—

(i.) That the phrase, "servant of Jesus Christ," *may* convey the idea of Apostleship, as in Rom. i. 1, Tit. i. 1. But in these passages, as in 2 Pet. i. 1, it is coupled with, and apparently distinct from, the title of Apostle; and in Phil. i. 1, it is applied also to Timothy, who was not an Apostle; and, lastly, it may be noted that, as the phrase certainly does not of necessity imply the Apostolate, it would assuredly be an insufficient allusion to it in a solitary letter from one of the less-known members of the Apostolic body.

(ii.) That if he were really the brother of the Lord, the writer would certainly have described himself as such rather than as the brother of James. But it is probable, as the author of the "Adumbrationes" ascribed to Clement of Alexandria long ago pointed out, that from motives of modesty he preferred to veil his casual relationship with the Lord under the general and less distinctive title, "the servant of Jesus Christ," as expressing his more important spiritual union with Him who had been by the Resurrection exalted as the Son of God, for the union through faith eclipsed the union through the flesh (Matt. xii. 49, 50; Heb. ii. 11). Indeed, as Dean Alford remarks, "had such a designation as the brother of the Lord been found in the address of an Epistle, it would have formed a strong *à priori* objection to its authenticity," as savouring rather of "those superstitious feelings with which the next and following ages regarded His earthly relatives."

It seems, therefore, more in accordance with the natural and simple bearing of the evidence to assume that the author of the Epistle was Jude, the brother of the Lord (whatever exact relationship that designation may imply), and not Jude Thaddæus, the Apostle, the son of James and grandson of Alphæus.

As to the after history of the writer:—The traditions connected with the name of Jude (all of which appear to be of late origin) relate to the Apostle Jude Thaddæus, except the interesting story preserved by Eusebius ("Eccl. Hist." iii. 20) from Hegesippus, that the descendants of Jude, "the reputed brother of the Saviour according to the flesh," were viewed with suspicion by the Emperor Domitian from their connection with David, the ancestor of the coming Messianic King, as likely to prove leaders in any Jewish rising against the Roman power; but they were eventually dismissed by him with contempt as

harmless rustics, when he found on examination that their ideas of the kingdom to come were not what he had imagined.

2. *Authenticity*.—The exact personality of the author being uncertain, we are not surprised to find that the canonicity of the letter has been a matter of doubt, not merely in modern times, but also in the early ages of the Church when it was not universally known.

The evidence bearing on the authenticity of any work naturally falls under two heads:—

Internal evidence gathered from the contents of the writing itself.

External evidence, consisting of points in the writings of other authors, or of facts in history, which in any way connect themselves with the work in question.

(i.) The evidence of genuineness which the letter itself presents is chiefly of a negative character, and may be summed up as follows:—

(a) No portion of it gives ground for the faintest suspicion that it was written with intent to impose upon the Church in any degree. The simple and indefinite description of the writer is in itself a mark of the straightforward character of the work. Accordingly we find that the doubts as to its canonicity have never been based upon any supposed traces of forgery in the Epistle.

(b) Neither the personage of the author, nor the nature of the contents, are sufficiently ambitious to render any fraud probable. Relatively speaking, the Epistle is of little importance either for novelty of revelation or for special application of doctrine; and a forger would have aimed at some more definite and significant object in order to obtain acceptance for his work. And it is from this comparatively unimportant character of the letter that the doubts as to its authenticity have mainly arisen, the question in the minds of the ancients being whether it seemed to fill any real gap in the fabric of Holy Scriptures.

(ii.) Passing to the evidence relating to the letter from external sources, we may briefly trace its history as follows:—

It is not noticed by any of the Apostolic Fathers, nor in the so-called Epistle of Barnabas and Shepherd of Hermas, nor is there any vestige of its existence in the writings of Irenæus and Papias. As already stated, it is absent from the Peshito Version of the New Testament (a work of untraceable antiquity) in com-

mon with the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John, and the Apocalypse. This fact, however, may merely show that at the early date when the Syriac translation was made the Epistle had not reached the Asiatic Churches, while the brevity of the letter and the limited aim of its contents sufficiently account for the absence of quotations from it in the early fathers.

Side by side as containing the earliest known trace of the Epistle come—

- (a) The old Latin Version of the New Testament, which it is thought must certainly have been made previous to A.D. 170, where the letter is found in its place among the canonical books; and
- (b) The Muratorian fragment of the Canon, *circa* A.D. 170, which says, "The Epistle of Jude and two Epistles bearing the name of John are received in the Catholic Church," or "among the Catholic Epistles," the text and interpretation being uncertain.

Clement of Alexandria, *circa* A.D. 165 to 220, refers to the Epistle more than once as the authoritative work of St. Jude, and is the first of the fathers to notice it.

Origen, A.D. 186 to 253, though in one passage seeming to concede only a disputed reception to the Epistle, yet elsewhere quotes from it several times, and in his comments on Matt. xiii. 55, 56, characterizes it as "an Epistle of few verses, but full of words vigorous with heavenly grace."

Tertullian, *circa* A.D. 190, not only regards the Epistle as the work of "an Apostle," but also uses it as a decisive proof of the authority of the Book of Enoch, which is quoted in it.

By subsequent writers it is frequently alluded to as an inspired authority. The cautious Eusebius, however, *circa* A.D. 270 to 340, even in his time in one passage (E. H. ii. 23) regards the book as a spurious writing, though in another (E. H. iii. 25) he merely places it among the disputed works. Lastly, Jerome, at the close of the fourth century, places the Epistle among the canonical books as the work of an Apostle, explaining that the doubts as to its authenticity in the past were chiefly due to the quotation from the Apocryphal Book of Enoch.

From the varied tone of these notices it will be observed that the Epistle only passed into acceptance throughout the Church by very slow degrees, which may be explained by the brevity and comparative insignificance of the work, the uncertainty as to its author, and the allusions to Apocryphal books which it contains; whilst it must also be borne in mind that the tendency of delay in the recognition of the Epistle by the different

Churches would be to increase rather than to diminish the force of prejudice.

3. *Object*.—The letter is addressed (verse 1) “to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus, and called.” This salutation is so general as to be applicable to all Christians, and thus serves to illustrate the aim of a “Catholic” Epistle in the simplest sense of this term. Similarly the exhortations and warnings throughout the Epistle would apply equally to all branches of the Church.

But perhaps two hints seem to point to a particularly Jewish Church as the primary destination of the letter:—

(i.) The description of the writer as the “brother of James,” which would not only be a sufficient identification, but would also have a special significance to Palestinian Christians, if that brother were James, the famous Bishop of Jerusalem.

(ii.) The thoroughly Jewish historical allusions; *e.g.* the Redemption from Egypt and purification in the wilderness (verse 5); the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrha (verse 7); the Rabbinic legend about the body of Moses (verse 9); the sins of Cain, Balaam, and Korah (verse 11); the traditions concerning Enoch (verses 14 and 15), all of which imply a Jewish turn of mind in the recipients of the Epistle.

It would therefore appear that the letter was originally written to Hebrew-Christians in Palestine, and this may perhaps be corroborated by the allusion to Apostolic teaching, *as a whole*, in verse 17, where it seems to be implied that the readers of the Epistle had themselves heard the Apostles generally.

The object which St. Jude had in writing to them is stated (verse 3) to be “to exhort them that they should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints;” and this exhortation is said (verse 4) to be rendered necessary by the evil examples of certain reprobate members in the Church, against whom he directs his efforts to warn his readers by a vehement exposure of their wickedness. These offenders appear to have been carnally-minded libertines who used the freedom of Christians from the literal obligation of the Mosaic law as a cloke for vice, living in licentiousness themselves and railing contemptuously against all authorities and rulers both ecclesiastical and civil. The handling of the subject will be more evident from an analysis of the letter; it is modelled throughout on a careful plan—bordering on the artificial—the main divisions, subdivisions, and instances all being arranged on a threefold system.

(A) *Preface*; verses 1—4:

I. Salutation: verse 1—2.

II. Object of the letter: verse 3.

III. Reason for this object: verse 4.

(B) *Warnings*; verses 5—19:

I. Three instances of Divine punishment for corporate wickedness applied to the case of these libertines: verses 5—10:

(a) The rebellious Israelites in the wilderness: verses 5, 8.

(b) The unfaithful angels in contrast to the faithful: verses 6, 9.

(c) The sensual cities of the plain: verses 7, 10.

II. Three instances of individual wickedness illustrating the sins of these evil-doers: verse 11:

(a) Cain = disobedience.

(b) Balaam = greed.

(c) Korah = railing.

III. Three vivid descriptions of these latest rebels, with three tokens by which their condemnation may be evident; verses 12—19:

(a) Illustration of their state by images from Nature: verses 12, 13; to be recognised from its agreement with the words of Enoch: verses 14, 15.

(b) By their base thoughts and language: verse 16; fulfilling the prophecies of the Apostles: verses 17, 18.

(c) By their unfaithful conduct, attested by their lack of spirituality: verse 19.

(C.) *Exhortations*; verses 20—25:

I. As to *themselves* (verse 20, 21) let his readers be firm in:

(a) Faith: verse 20.

(b) Love: verse 21*a*.

(c) Hope: verse 21*b*.

II. With reference to *the libertines* (verses 22, 23) let the faithful treat:

(a) Some of them with gentle measures: verse 22.

(b) Others with strong remedies: verse 23*a*.

(c) But all their sins with utter disapproval: verse 23*b*.

III. As regards *God*: Doxology (verses 24, 25) let all join in thanks to Him for:

(a) His support against similar falling away: verse 24*a*.

(b) His grace in sanctification: verse 24*b*.

(c) His wisdom in overruling everything: verse 25.

4. *Date, Place, etc., of Writing*.—On these points we have no direct information, either internal or external: all the indications are so slender that the inferences deduced from them have varied considerably in everything except uncertainty.

(i.) The story preserved by Eusebius (quoted above) seems to imply that the descendants of St. Jude were summoned from Palestine to the Emperor Domitian; and as we found that the writer appeared to claim a Palestinian reputation in the opening

of his Epistle, we may perhaps most reasonably conjecture that the letter was written somewhere in the Holy Land.

(ii.) In verse 17 the teaching of the Apostles is alluded to as a thing of the past; "the words which *were spoken before*" "how they *told* you." This language, however, cannot be forced to mean more than that the Apostles had passed away from that particular part of the world where St. Jude's readers resided, and were carrying on their work elsewhere.

(iii.) The internal condition of the Church to which the Epistle points is certainly not very far advanced. There appears to have been no definite code of discipline; notorious offenders are still members of the Church, and present at the Agapæ, or Love-feasts, which united all Church-members: even the most violent upholders of new opinions are not ecclesiastically deposed, and are only just beginning to separate themselves (verse 19). The reaction of the escape from Judaism is still fresh, as in the case of the recipients of some of St. Paul's Epistles, and shows itself in the laxity of these libertines; their excesses are of a primitive nature, and their heresies are not yet developed into a system.

(iv.) It is noteworthy that the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) is in no way alluded to, which would appear to point to a previous date for the composition of the letter. It has indeed been asserted that the event is in no degree connected with the subject of the Epistle, and that therefore there is no cause for surprise in the omission of all reference to it, although it might have already taken place. But the writer expressly bases his warnings on the most notable judgments of God for disobedience; and therefore, with such a subject in hand, he would have found the destruction of Jerusalem and overthrow of the Jewish nation, signally to the purpose, if it had been accomplished, as a recent instance parallel to that of the Church in the wilderness (verse 5) or of the fallen angels (verse 6).

The result of these slight indications is to point to a date towards the close of the era of general Apostolic labour, yet previous to the fall of Jerusalem, *i.e.* some time between A.D. 60—70.

As to the language in which the Epistle was originally written, there is not sufficient warrant to suppose that the letter ever appeared in any other than the Greek dress which it now wears. Attempts have been made to prove that the original was in Hebrew; but the fact that the language is Greek written by a Jew is enough to explain any apparent Semiticisms which may be noticeable in places.

5. *Peculiarities.*—Besides the impetuous and intensely earnest style, which must be an evident token of the writer's character,

this short Epistle presents in an important degree the interesting peculiarity of definitely referring to events in the ancient history of the Church of God which are not contained in the Canonical Books of the Old Testament, even going so far in one startling instance as to quote directly from the Apocryphal Book of Enoch.

(i.) In verse 9 we are informed of a conflict between the Archangel Michael and the devil on the body of Moses, and it is natural to inquire whence the writer obtained this allusion.

In the "Adumbrationes" assigned to Clement of Alexandria, and in Origen's work "De Principiis" III., ii. 1, mention is made of an apocryphal book called "The Assumption of Moses" (parts of which have been discovered in a Latin translation), as containing notice of this conflict; and this, according to Didymus of Alexandria, was the reason why the Manichees rejected the Epistle.

But we are not in a position to say that this book was in existence at the time of St. Jude, nor that—supposing it were written before his day—he was actually acquainted with it, though, according to some late writers, Gal. v. 6; vi. 15, is a quotation from it by St. Paul.

It is more probable that St. Jude's knowledge of this legend was derived from the same source as that whence the author of "The Assumption of Moses" received it, viz., from the tradition of the Jewish Rabbis. The original groundwork of the legend is doubtless the passage in the Targum of Jonathan (which is supposed to have existed in oral form at the time of our Lord), on Deut. xxxiv. 6, which states that the grave of Moses was placed under the care of Michael. Round this centre floated a whole cycle of legends, traceable here and there in Rabbinic literature, of which St. Jude here adopts one—without necessarily investing it with any canonical authority—to illustrate his purpose, as being known to his readers and showing the feelings of right-minded men—apart from inspiration—against certain conduct.

Similarly, St. Paul takes up names current amongst the Rabbis for the Egyptian magicians who imitated the miracles of Moses before Pharaoh (2 Tim. iii. 8), or employs the Rabbinic legend of the Rock following the Israelites in the wilderness, to draw out a spiritual lesson (1 Cor. x. 4); compare also Acts vii. 22, 23, 30; Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 12; xi. 24, for a somewhat similar use of Rabbinic tradition to supplement the narratives of the Old Testament. The case is analogous to St. Paul's applications of the sayings of heathen poets in Acts xvii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 32; Tit. i. 12.

(ii.) In verses 6, 14, 15, we have passages which appear to be

derived from the Book of Enoch. This book is now generally assigned—at least in its earliest portions—to a date quite a century before our Lord, and the widespread acquaintance with it in the ecclesiastical writings of the second century A.D. seems to render it probable that St. Jude derived his language in these verses rather from the book itself than from independent tradition afterwards incorporated into the book. The Book of Enoch is an important early work of the apocalyptic class modelled on the style of the latter part of Daniel.

It was used by the early fathers—Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Augustine—though Tertullian alone regarded it as canonical. After their time, however, the book as a whole was lost, and all that remained of it was represented by the quotations in these and other writers. But in 1773 the *Æthiopic* translation of the book was discovered and brought over to England by the traveller Bruce. This translation was made during the fourth century A.D. from the Greek, but the original language in which the book was written is generally thought to have been Hebrew.

It contains, in one hundred and eight chapters, a series of visions claiming to have been accorded to Enoch and Noah, and explaining the working of Providence in the world—from a Jewish point of view.

The substance of Jude, verse 6, is contained repeatedly in the book, and it seems preferable to refer his traditions to this work rather than to Gen. vi. 2, of which the interpretation is uncertain and much disputed.

The passage in Jude, verses 14 and 15, is contained almost verbatim in Enoch, chap. ii.

On the remaining important point to notice, viz., the relation between the Second Epistle of St. Peter and that of St. Jude—see the chapter on the former Epistle.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

1. *The Enigma of the Church.*—It is impossible not to sympathise, to a certain extent at least, with those who, in every age, have found difficulty in accepting as a divinely inspired and canonical book the Revelation of St. John. In its contents and in its style, it is so entirely different from all the other books of the New Testament, that it is not easy to class it along with them as produced by the operation of the same Spirit, and directed to the attainment of the same end. Everything else contained in the sacred volume, exclaims the humble follower of Christ, content to walk by the light of a few simple truths, is comparatively easy; “A wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.” Here all is dark and perplexing—an extravagance of figure such as was never before witnessed, and an irregularity of language such as has no parallel in any ancient writing, either sacred or profane; it is impossible that this book can be from Him who loves to guide the weak in judgment, and to teach them His way. Such was undoubtedly the feeling of those who in early Christian times refused to acknowledge the inspiration of the Apocalypse.

The feeling is hardly less prevalent now than it was then; while many who have really tried to grapple with the subject, and have for this purpose studied the history of apocalyptic interpretation, have only become more perplexed than ever. Tossed from one system of interpretation to another; introduced to a medley of dates deduced from the same words, but often differing from each other by centuries; taught to see at one moment the greatest, at another the paltriest, events of human history represented by the same figures, and always finding their guides animated by unshaken confidence in their own views, and even passionately opposed to others, it is no wonder that the further they try to penetrate into the wood, the more obscure and tangled does their path become. Strange surely that it should be so, and that the only book in the Bible which has annexed to it the promise, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the

prophecy," should be, at first sight at least, the one most difficult to comprehend.

Yet the Church would under no circumstances be entitled to despair. If she has good reason to believe that the authenticity and genuineness of the work are established by a chain of evidence, as unbroken and strong as in the case of any other book of the New Testament; more especially if the evidence points to St. John, "the beloved disciple" of Jesus, rather than to some wholly unknown person, as the author, she must believe that the difficulties connected with the subject are capable of being, and will be finally, overcome. Nothing can be more inconsistent with the whole idea of revelation, nothing more out of keeping with God's other dealings in creation, providence, or grace, than to imagine that a book has been put into our hands designed to perplex and trouble us. And this is the more evident when we observe that the writer of the book distinctly states that he writes for the encouragement and comfort of his "brethren," of those who were "companions with him in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus;" that he feels that he has a divine commission to "*show* unto God's servants the things which must shortly come to pass;" and that in the seven epistles of chaps. ii. and iii., which contain an abstract of all that is afterwards unfolded in the book, we have the seven times repeated cry, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches" (chaps. i. 1, 9, ii., iii.).

The expectation thus founded in the nature of the case is confirmed by results. It can hardly be denied that the more recent interpretations of the Apocalypse have exhibited greater unity of view as to its meaning than had been witnessed for several centuries. As the storms of the period immediately preceding and following the Reformation passed away, light began to break again in the Church's sky, and the mistaken interpretations of a time of disunion and discord among brethren to disappear, till at last we seem to be on the verge of a period when, if opinions are not less discordant than ever regarding some external critical questions affecting the Apocalypse, they are approaching harmony as to the principles upon which it is, if received, to be understood.

In these circumstances it would be at once faithless and cowardly to despair. The writer of the book did not only understand what he was saying. The sublime march of his periods; the grandeur of his figures when we look at them with Jewish eyes; the at one time terrible, at another pathetic, eloquence of his language; the glow, in short, of prophetic and poetic enthusiasm which is diffused over every part of his work, show that he

was himself cheered, roused, and transported by what he saw. As he saw he would have us see; and we must be as he was if we would see with him. Let the Church therefore only approach her task of endeavouring to see with meekness, humility, and love; let her rise above the thought of different, of too often jarring, sections of her body; let her remember that she is one, and that it is with the whole body as the Bride of Christ that she has here to do, and there can be little doubt that the darkness so often complained of will be dispelled, and that she too, by what she sees, will be not less cheered, roused, and transported than the beloved disciple was to whom the vision was first given.

2. *The Unity of the Apocalypse*.—In turning our attention more particularly to the book before us, recent events have shown that one point in connection with it requires fuller notice than would have been thought necessary only a few years ago. The unity of the book has been of late seriously disputed. It had been so before, but the controversy had been apparently exhausted; and so general was the agreement that one author only had taken part in its composition, that commentators had begun in their *prolegomena* to leave the question of its unity undiscussed. Völter and Weizäcker at Tübingen, and Vischer and Harnack at Marburg, have recently revived the controversy, and it is necessary to say something in regard to it. It is unnecessary, indeed, to speak at any length either of Weizäcker or of Harnack. The former in his elaborate work, "Das Apostolische Zeitalter," 1886, has simply intimated his belief that the Apocalypse is in many of its parts more or less interpolated; the latter, in his "Texte und Untersuchungen," vol. ii. part 3, 1886, has done nothing more than adopt, with a few commendatory suggestions, the views of his pupil Vischer. The real attack is by Völter first and Vischer afterwards.

(i.) The first of these critics published his views in 1882, and afterwards in a second and enlarged edition of his pamphlet in 1885. They amount to this, that instead of proceeding as a whole from one author, the Apocalypse consists of five different parts, belonging to eras of the Church more or less remote from each other, and written by at least four different persons. The book had been at first very brief, and greatly limited in its scope; but so much had it been valued, that it was repeatedly enlarged, and different recensions were produced, the last of which appeared between A.D. 160 and A.D. 170. The attempt is made to show that there is a correspondence between the different parts of the book and contemporary events so close as to justify the conclusion that the former were taken from the latter. It is needless to add that, under the process, the spiritual life and power of the book wholly

disappear, and that it becomes a narrative relating only to the craft and follies of cunning impostors, wicked kings, and deluded peoples.

The second critic named pursues an entirely different course. Under the impression that there are two distinct lines of thought in the Apocalypse, especially in its Christology, and that these two lines cannot be traced to one mind, Vischer supposes that the groundwork of what we now possess was a *Jewish* Apocalypse which had passed into the early Christian Church, and attained great reputation there; that an unknown member of the latter body had resolved to adapt the book more thoroughly to Christian uses, and that for this purpose he had interpolated it with Christian thoughts, more particularly prefixing the first three chapters, adding the latter part of the twenty-second chapter, and introducing now the word "lamb," now again the word "Jesus" or "Christ," but occasionally also finding room for whole paragraphs, such as the second vision of chap. vii., the first vision of chap. xiv., and several verses associated in chaps. xxi. and xxii. with the descriptions there given of the millennial glory and of the New Jerusalem. The re-worker thus, as it were, baptized the old Jewish Apocalypse in a Christian font, and a Jewish became a Christian child.

(ii.) We may be spared dwelling at any length upon the views of the two writers named, for this reason, if for no other, that they have taken up each an attitude of determined opposition to the other. Vischer in publishing his theory was careful to demonstrate the weakness of Völter's; Völter in self-defence held up Vischer's theory to ridicule and scorn. The two critics may be left to bring their controversy to a close at the time most convenient for themselves. Meanwhile it is sufficient to say that neither has gained anything like a general, or even a widespread, acceptance for his theory. Völter has failed to account for that similarity of style which marks the whole book and is inconsistent with the supposition of so many different authors having been engaged on it, while his correspondences of place and time are only gained by forcing the text into meanings which it is impossible for it to bear. Vischer, on the other hand, while proceeding upon the simple plan of cutting out all direct Christian allusions in the book, leaves us as a Jewish work what no Jew could have written, expectations and hopes inconsistent with those which we know to have been entertained in Israel, and long passages which, even when such words as "the lamb" or "Jesus" have been removed from them, can only be accounted for on the supposition that they are the product of a Christian pen. Both writers, too, ignore the fact that a spiritual interpretation of the Apocalypse,

not differing in principle from that which must be applied to other parts of Scripture, is possible; that harmony of purpose may be shown to mark all the visions which it contains; that one consistent meaning may be traced throughout; and that the difficulties to be met by the theories resorted to are easily overcome by attention to those principles of plan and structure upon which the author everywhere proceeds.

These last considerations, indeed, are to be urged not only negatively but positively by the defender of the unity of the Apocalypse. No book probably ever proceeded from the pen of man all the parts of which were so closely interlaced with one another. Allusions in earlier parts are very frequently unintelligible until they are more fully explained in later parts. Descriptions in later parts point back for the key that is to open up the mystery of their meaning to earlier parts. Again and again, when we seem, upon a superficial inspection, to be dealing with visions relating to new subjects, we find upon a closer examination that we have only before us old thoughts in a new form. Throughout the book there is from first to last the unfolding of one great thought, of one great principle of the Divine government of the Church and the world. Add to all this that the writer's peculiarities of style and language are of a kind which render it almost impossible to think that a forger or interpolator, especially in an age for which our opponents claim artlessness of composition as a leading characteristic, could successfully imitate them without betraying what he was, and we are entitled to conclude that, whatever other difficulties the Revelation of St. John may present, it is at least in its authorship one compact and united whole.

3. *Authorship*.—The book is one. Who is the author of it? is the next question that the reader naturally asks. The Church, from the beginning to the present century, with an exception so trifling that it is unnecessary to notice it, has always answered, the Apostle John. An introduction such as this is hardly the place to present in regular and successive order the various testimonies of early Christianity by which the Church was led to this conclusion. And it is the less necessary to do so because their force is not denied. The *external* evidence in favour, not only of the apostolic but of the Johannine authorship of the book, is even singularly unanimous and complete; and doubts as to the validity of the long unquestioned conclusion have sprung wholly from another quarter.

Internal considerations have awakened them. The nature of the book itself has produced a feeling of uncertainty whether it can be ascribed to any member of the apostolic circle; and more particularly whether, if St. John be at the same time the author of the Gospel, it can be ascribed to him. Keeping in view for a

moment only the first of these two points, it may be observed that there is nothing in the book inconsistent with the supposition that it may have proceeded from one belonging to a company of poor and unlettered men. The poetic fire which it displays, the rich exuberance of figures and symbols which it employs, the strong and impassioned language in which it speaks, are not the result of education in any age, and least of all of the education given in Jewish circles at the beginning of the Christian era. The formalism of the Rabbis of that time, their narrow devotion to the letter only of what they studied, their dependence upon the sayings of their predecessors in their schools, and their repression of all originality in their pupils, would tend powerfully to check the development of that spirit which the Apocalypse reveals.

We can understand the writing of such a book if its author came to his task either from direct study of the old prophets of his people or from personal contact with the life of Jesus, for in both cases conventionalities had been broken through, mannerism had been overcome, and freedom, alike of thought and style, had burst the bonds of that trifling occupation with the smallest particulars of the Divine Word, in which its general spirit had been lost sight of and its great end missed. But we cannot so well understand it if we are to look for the writer among those who were educated, in the sense in which education was then given, among the "wise and prudent" rather than among the "unlearned and ignorant" (Acts iv. 13). Nor is there an improbability in the idea that its author should have pursued, at least in early life, the occupation of a fisherman upon the Sea of Galilee, and that he should never have risen above an estate of poverty. A similar objection might be urged against the idea that "The Pilgrim's Progress" was written by a poor tinker of Bedford. Depth of emotion, insight into the dealings of God with the soul of man, hatred of sin, conviction of righteousness, and a strong persuasion that, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, there is a righteous Governor of the universe who will yet avenge His elect, may be found not less among the poor and suffering than among the rich and prosperous. Nay, they are more natural to the one than to the other, for the former know, by an experience such as the latter can hardly have, by an experience which penetrates the inmost fibres of their being, what the trials of this world are, and what that "patience in Jesus" (Rev. i. 9) is which alone can meet them. We can have no difficulty, therefore, in accepting the conclusion that, striking as the characteristics of the Apocalypse are, that book *may* have proceeded from one of our Lord's Apostles, or even from St. John.

The question, however, still remains whether, although such authorship be allowed to be possible, the thought of it is not forbidden by indications contained in the book itself. And this difficulty, it is imagined, may be urged with irresistible power against those who receive the Fourth Gospel as, not less than the Apocalypse, the work of the Apostle John. The Church does thus receive it, and the belief of the Church upon the point has been defended in the Introduction to the Fourth Gospel contained in this volume. The present writer accepts the conclusion; and he is bound, therefore, to say something, however briefly, upon the possibility of ascribing the Apocalypse also to the same Apostle.

Several minor objections, indeed, drawn from internal indications, we may be permitted to pass by without dwelling upon them. In the eyes of the English reader they will hardly appear to have much weight. Such are the facts, that the John of the Apocalypse names himself, while the writer of the Fourth Gospel and of the catholic Epistles ascribed to St. John does not do so; that, instead of describing himself in the opening of his book as an Apostle, he calls himself only a "servant" of Christ (chap. i. 1); and that he could not have spoken as he does in chap. xxi. 14, of the wall of the New Jerusalem having "twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb," had he himself been one of the twelve. Objections like these will make no impression upon the mind if we can satisfy ourselves that the more serious objections still remaining may be met. Let us turn, therefore, to them.

(i.) It is urged with great confidence that the style and language of the two books are so different as to show that they cannot be the expression of the same mind. The difference is admitted; but as to the mere *language*, it can be shown, though hardly without constant reference to the original Greek, that the difference is designed, and that there is a strikingly parallel difference between the plainer parts of the discourses of Christ and His more sublime and mysterious utterances at critical moments of His life. Of this difference, our Lord's discourses upon the Last Things, in Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi., and His words at the institution of the Last Supper, Matt. xxvi. 26—29; Mark xiv. 22—25; Luke xxii. 14—20; 1 Cor. xi. 23—25, to say nothing of the discourses in St. John's Gospel, compared with those in the Synoptists, may afford sufficient illustration.

As to the general *style and method* of the Apocalypse, again, as it shows itself in symbol and figure, and on the supposition, which appears to be the most probable, that both it and the Fourth Gospel were written in the last decade of the first century, the chief difficulty is to conceive that the same writer could employ two such different styles at the same period of his life. Yet the

difficulty is not so great as might at first appear. It really resolves itself into the question, Could the same writer, at the same age and surrounded by the same circumstances, entertain the calm thought of an historical life lived in the past, side by side with a poetic and prophetic vision of the future, which the Leader of that life had Himself suggested at moments when He rose to loftier than ordinary heights of prophetic utterance? There seems no good reason why that question should be answered in the negative; and if the two pictures could dwell in his mind, he could certainly present them to his readers. It is too often forgotten that, in our Lord's own language, we have two entirely different styles of thought; and that if these could coexist in Him, they might also coexist in one to whom He was so drawn by some wonderful affinity that He regarded Him as "the disciple whom He loved."

(ii.) With not less confidence it is urged that the tone and temper of the two books are so different, that if St. John be the author of the one he cannot also be the author of the other. But this objection rests upon a failure to estimate the true character of the Gospel similar to that of which we have just spoken in regard to the utterances of Jesus. There can be no greater mistake than to speak of the Fourth Gospel as a calm and peaceful idyl, revealing nothing but the outgoings of a tender heart towards loved disciples, and breathing nothing but serenity and repose. Such is certainly not the character of the Apocalypse, but it is not less false to fact to say that it is the character of the Gospel. If the one is full of tumult, war, and excited passion, the other is not less so. There are, no doubt, passages in it which exhibit the spirit ascribed by partial observation to the whole. Such are chaps. xiii. to xvii., in which Jesus finds Himself in the bosom of the little family He is shortly to leave, and in which He speaks to them with all the sympathy and tenderness of a dying father who knows that he is about to be taken from his children, and that after his departure they will be exposed without the support of his immediate presence to the coldness and opposition of the world. But these chapters are not the central portion of the book. That portion we must seek for in the chapters closing with chap. xii., in which the Saviour's struggle with the world is so strikingly presented to us. In these chapters, accordingly, we meet the very same characteristics as those by which the Apocalypse is marked—a constantly increasing opposition between the world and Jesus, the hatred of the former to the latter, as well as the severity of the latter's judgment on the former, ever deepening in intensity and force. There is excitement, tumult, war in the one book as much as in the other. In each the compassionate Redeemer, who purchased His people with His blood and

weeps with them in their sorrows, is also the judge of men and the triumphant conqueror over all His enemies.

(iii.) A difference of teaching has also been urged as separating the two books to an extent which shows that, if St. John be the author of the Jewish Gospel, he cannot also be the author of the Apocalypse. The subject thus opened up is wide ; but it may be sufficient to say that when the Apocalypse is, as it ought to be, interpreted according to the exegetical rules suggested by itself, not only is there no difference in the teaching of the two books : their similarity in this respect is rather their most striking feature. Every one will admit that, in each of the New Testament writers, there is, as we might expect, a type of teaching peculiar to himself. The substance is the same, but the point of view from which it is looked at and the form differ. No one will contend that St. James, St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John are not, in the manner in which they present the truth, clearly distinguishable from one another. Much is the same, but much also is so peculiar to each that we at once feel ourselves entitled to say, "This is his, and no other's ; this is characteristic of one of them, and not of the other three." Bearing this in mind, let us now take the most characteristic parts of the teaching of the Apocalypse, and it will be found that they present a mode of thought differing from that of all the other New Testament writers except St. John ; and, further, not only not differing from him, but resembling him in the closest and most remarkable degree.

The force of these remarks can be fully appreciated only when the doctrinal teachings of the two books are carefully studied and compared throughout. But in confirmation of what has been said, we may refer the reader to the mode in which they present the truths connected with the Person and Kingdom of Christ ; the field of His working, and the work He has to do in it ; the appropriation of redemption, and the relation of believers to their Lord ; the moral freedom of man ; and the final judgment. It is not too much to allege that on every one of these points there is a most singular degree of correspondence between the way in which the author of the Apocalypse and the author of the Fourth Gospel think. We are compelled to come to the conclusion that the former cannot be St. James, or St. Peter, or St. Paul, but that, in so far as striking similarity of thought in two books leads us to identify the same person as the author of both, he may be, and probably is, St. John.*

Enough has been said upon the question immediately before us.

* The similarity alluded to above has been unfolded at considerable length by the present writer in his "Revelation of St. John," 2nd Edition, 1887, in the Appendix devoted to a comparison of the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel. To this he is compelled by want of space here to refer the reader.

External evidence is, by the admission of all inquirers, strongly in favour of the Johannine origin of the Apocalypse. Internal evidence alone occasions difficulty; but the more minutely the book is examined the more do the difficulties suggested either by its contents or their form disappear. We may therefore take the book into our hands, and without hesitation feel that we are listening to the words of that Apostle who was known in the early Christian Church by the beautiful name of *Epistethios*, the leaner upon the breast.

We turn now to the question which most of all concerns us when we take an Apostolic or divinely-inspired book into our hands.

4. *The Meaning.*—In what sense are we to understand the book? What is it designed to teach us? What does it mean? No book of the New Testament has been so singularly tossed about among different and contradictory explanations. It is not wonderful that it should have been so, for the Apocalypse affords opportunities for variety of interpretation such as few books do. The wonder only is that the Church should have so largely acquiesced in this state of matters, and should not have been more impatient of conclusions fatal to the intelligent reception of a book proclaimed by her to be divine. Is there any way then by which we may be guided through the labyrinth, any test that we may apply to determine which of all the varying interpretations has the chief claim on our regard?

We start, of course, with the supposition that each, to a certain extent at least, *may* fairly represent the meaning of the words, and that, at the beginning of our efforts, we are not entitled to put aside any of them as absolutely impossible. Our test, then, is one strictly fair. Does the interpretation we adopt, while violating no law of language, give unity, harmony, completeness, to the book? We have already, it will be remembered, seen that the book is *one*. It comes from one author, and that evidently an author of originality and force. It follows, therefore, from the best known laws of the human mind, that the meaning of the book must be one, that every part of it will bear upon one result, and that no part will be inconsistent with the rest. Let this great law of interpretation be fulfilled in the case of any book that we are endeavouring to understand, and we shall have no small reason to believe that we have obtained possession of the key which unlocks its meaning.

Before entering directly upon this, however, there is one prepossession to which it seems desirable to allude. We are told by not a few leading scholars that it is impossible to listen to any other interpretation of the Apocalypse than that which simply sees in it the reflection of the historical circumstances in the midst of

which the writer was placed. This prepossession must be removed before we proceed further, and it ought to disappear before the application of the rule just spoken of. The simply historical interpretation is not enough. It fails to give that unity and consistency to the interpretation of the book which is the main guarantee of the correctness of whatever theory we adopt. Harnack, one of the latest writers upon this point, has indeed said, "All interpretations not strictly historical must be excluded. The ethico-spiritualistic, rationalistic, and dogmatic explanations, such as were first attempted by the Alexandrian theologians, are fatal to the understanding of the book, as are also the explanations drawn from Church history which were first put forward by Mediæval sects. To see with Hengstenberg 'demagogy' in 'Gog and Magog' (xx. 8), to identify 'Apollyon' (ix. 11) with 'Napoleon,' or in Antichrist to detect the Emperor, or the Pope, or Mohammed, or Luther, or Calvin—these interpretations are not a bit worse than those which turn the book into a compendium of morality or dogma, wherein is set forth by means of imagery and allegories the triumph of virtue over vice or of orthodoxy over heterodoxy."*

Before pronouncing such a judgment it would have been well for Harnack, who is here the representative of many other critics, to have seen that he had himself a consistent interpretation to propose. Even then indeed the author, while dealing simply with the historical facts of his own time, might have beheld in them the deeper meaning which they involved, and might have delineated them, not for their own sake, but for the sake of bringing that deeper meaning into view. The demand, however, which we are surely first of all entitled to make upon those who see in the Apocalypse no more than the counterpart of the political facts of the seventh and eighth decades of the first century is, that the facts shall be correctly stated, or that the book shall agree with the facts. But it does not do so, when we refuse to see in its facts pictures (let them be called "figures" or "allegories," as men please) of deeper thoughts.

Thus, upon the supposition we are now combating, the Antichrist of chap. xiii. and of chap. xvii. must either be Nero, or, as Harnack prefers to suppose, not the Nero of Tacitus, but the impostor who in the reign of Vespasian raised an insurrection in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, and who, having been for a time supported by Artobanus, who would have restored him at Rome by force of arms, was at last surrendered by the Parthians, about A.D. 88, to Domitian.† Now the great objection to all this is, that it does not correspond to the facts. It has

* In the *Encycl. Britann.*, 9th Edition, "Revelation," p. 496.

† U. S., p. 500.

been far too much overlooked by inquirers that chaps. xiii. and xvii. of our book do *not* proceed upon the supposition of the prevalence of a popular rumour that Nero had not died, but would again return from his place of exile to his old dominion. They proceed upon the supposition of an actual death and of an actual resurrection from the dead. Such an idea, however, had never entered into the popular mind; and, if the Apostle entertained it, he was simply false to the very circumstances upon which it is believed that his whole description rests.

Again, the proposal has been made by Mommsen to find in the second beast of chap. xiii. the imperial representatives in the provinces, especially the Roman Governors in the Asiatic provinces. The proposal is said by Harnack to be "very probable" and to rest "on good grounds."* But can any one who gives due attention to the fact that the Jewish Apocalyptist speaks of this second beast as "the false prophet," and who says of it that "he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men" (chap. xiii. 13), imagine for a moment that a merely secular, not religious, authority could have supplied the foundation of the figure? The thing is impossible. But these Governors were purely secular authorities. If the theory is correct the Apocalyptist is again false to his facts.

Once more, Harnack urges that the three-and-a-half years, so often spoken of, must be taken literally, "The three-and-a-half years in xi. 2, xii. 14, xiii. 5 are taken from the Apocalypse of Daniel, and no deeper meaning is to be sought in them."† In that case, however, the writer, if he writes in the year 68, is not dealing with facts of which he is cognisant; he is predicting; and, if he writes near the year 80, he is supposing a state of affairs at variance with what he must have known to have been the course of history.

The consequence of all this is that nothing can be done to solve the important question of date. Difficulties of one kind or another meet us at each step, and Harnack himself is compelled to resort to the supposition, for which there is not the slightest evidence, that the book, after having been written under Galba, underwent various revisions under Vespasian, about 75 to 79, and perhaps under Domitian, 93 to 96.

Thus it appears that the historical interpretation, in the sense above spoken of, fails to explain the phenomena. It would certainly be no sound argument for rejecting it that, did it afford the only meaning of the book, the Apocalypse would not be worthy of a place in the canon of Scripture. Proof that it is not worthy of its place there is open to any one who can estab-

* U. S., p. 499.

† U. S., p. 500, note 2.

lish such a view. Our contention is, that the attempt to interpret it as a writing founded simply on the political or politico-ecclesiastical events of the writer's time, and with no deeper purpose than to describe them, fails. The book ceases to have unity, consistency, and meaning.

Unquestionably it must be admitted that the author wrote from the standpoint of his own age, with its events before his eyes, and with a practical purpose bearing primarily upon it. But that did not hinder him from beholding these events less in themselves than in the eternal principles that underlay them and came into manifestation through them. Nothing is clearer than that he was the child of his time in a sense in which few writers are. Why should he not also be steeped in the principles which had made the past what it was, and which were to form the future? To think that he was so, to think that he cared more for the ideal than the phenomenal, for the deeper meaning of facts than for the facts themselves, is to put him on a level with the highest, not the lowest, spirits of our race, and with all in whom God has most clearly spoken. Then, if proceeding on this principle we find that such an interpretation lends consistency, harmony, unity to the book regarded as a whole, we have every reason to think that our interpretation is true, or that, at all events, it ought not to be put on a level with the absurdities of mediæval sects.

With these preliminary remarks let us now notice one or two considerations to be borne in mind when we try to ascertain the meaning of the Apocalypse.

(i.) The book is not prophetic in the ordinary sense of the word. It is not intended to set before us any *series of events* which were to occur during the long period known to us, though not to the early Christians, as to precede the Lord's second coming. That it has relation to the future is undoubted. The first words of the book are, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show unto His servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass." But there are two ways of viewing the future. We may think of it as a time when events of greater or of less importance will follow one another in close succession as they have done in the past; or we may think of it simply as a time when certain great principles of God's government will be made manifest by the course of human affairs. A prophet introduces us, at least in a certain measure, to the one, an Apocalypticist to the other. The line of distinction indeed cannot be sharply drawn. Prophecy deals very largely with principles, and to think of it only as prediction is to remove from it one of the chief elements of that inspiration by which the prophet spoke.

Apocalyptic vision deals also to some extent with the embodi-

ment of principles in events; but this, for the most part, only because it is necessary to give principles, in order that we may *see* them, a concrete form. Though, however, the two methods of revelation have thus a good deal in common, they are in their main characteristics distinct, and we are not to look in the Revelation of St. John for any prediction of events beyond that great event of which the whole New Testament is full—the manifestation of the glory of the now exalted but hidden Lord, together with His complete and final victory over all evil. The Apocalyptic writer, indeed, was hardly in a position to think of any important succession of events. These could not happen without presupposing a long time for their evolution. But no such long time was before his eyes. “The things which must shortly come to pass” were what he saw. “The time is at hand” was the feeling with which he contemplated their occurrence. “Behold, I come quickly,” was the cry which sounded in his ears from the glorified Redeemer for whom he waited (i. 1, 3; xxii. 20). In so far as he thought of time at all he thought of it as contracted, hurried, brief. At any moment the Lord whom he loved, and who was alive for evermore, might appear in glory.

The Apocalypse, accordingly, is only prophetic in the sense in which the great discourse of our Lord Himself, contained in the first three Gospels (Matt. xxiv., xxv., and parallels), is prophetic. When carefully studied in its whole form of articulation and substance, it appears to be simply an expansion of that discourse. We may well suppose that upon no words of his Lord would the “beloved disciple” more constantly or more fondly dwell than upon those which, if they told of his Master’s going away, told not less of His coming again—the Bridegroom of His Church, the Master of His waiting servants, the Friend who united Himself so closely to the humblest member of His Body (Matt. xxv. 1, &c., 14, &c., 40). As he lingered upon the great truths contained in that last discourse of Jesus they took shape in the figures which the Old Testament and his Jewish training had made familiar to him; and the Apocalypse was the result. We shall be wrong, therefore, if we treat the book as predictive, and if we seek in particular events either of the Church’s or the world’s history for the fulfilment of its supposed predictions.

(ii.) The book is mainly occupied with the enunciation of the great principles which guide the action of the Church’s Lord until the time of His return. It has sometimes been said of late that, after the first introduction of the Saviour in chap. i., we hear nothing of Him again until He comes forth at the head of His armies in chap. xix. There cannot be a greater mistake. The whole book is the action of Jesus, though of Jesus glorified; and in this respect it corresponds to the Acts of the Apostles

as related to the Third Gospel. In that book the writer looks back to something which he had previously written, and begins what he has now to say with the words, "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up" (chap. i. 1). Thus speaking he indicates by the word "*began*," that he is about to take up the thread of his earlier narrative, and to explain to us the action of Jesus after He "parted from His disciples and was carried up into heaven" (Luke xxiv. 51). Thus also is it with St. John in the Revelation, and there is no vision of the book in which the action is not that of Jesus glorified.

There is this difference, indeed, that while the Acts of the Apostles shows us, in the events of history, how the great King and Head of all founds and propagates His Church in the world, the Apocalypse shows us in symbolic representation the principles upon which He does so. The latter book thus becomes the emblematic delineation of that great struggle between light and darkness, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between Christ and Satan, which constitutes the essence of the Church's and the world's history. The Church and the world, in its Johanne sense, are fundamentally opposed to one another, and both make ceaseless efforts to rule the heart and to control the destiny of man. We are invited by St. John to take our stand upon a commanding height, and to watch the struggle from its beginning to its close. Nor can it be said that to confine the Apocalypse to this one thought is to give it a field meagre, limited, and at last made tame and wearisome by constant repetition.

Whether we allow it at first or not, this is really the history of humanity as it passes onward to that goal to which all things both around and within it point, and for which "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. viii. 22). There is the mustering of the hosts; there is the shock of battle; there is the deepening eagerness of the combatants; there are angels looking on as well as men; there is the preservation of the righteous; there is the overthrow of the wicked; there are the hallelujahs of heaven and earth as good gains its victory; there are the lamentations of all who had been made rich by the world's dainties as, like a great millstone cast into the sea, "Babylon, the great city, is cast down, and shall be found no more at all" (chap. xviii. 21). The manifestation of principles like these can never pall upon us. They are rather a source of profound and endless interest, until we feel that we can no longer sit inactive spectators upon our height, but must come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty (Judges v. 23).

(iii.) The action of the book covers the whole Christian era from its beginning to its end. Perplexed by such words as those which have been already quoted regarding the shortness of the time, and seeing in the visions of the Seer representations only of events contemporaneous with himself, many commentators have thought it necessary to limit St. John's field of vision to things passing around him at the moment when he wrote. Only a slight inspection of the book is sufficient to show that such limitation is impossible. It is true that St. John did start from the events of his own day, but he beheld in them illustrations of principles which had marked the dealings of God with His people in all past ages of His Church, and which would continue to mark His dealings to the end. That end is constantly before him. It is not reached either in the destruction of Jerusalem or in any prospect of the overthrow of the Roman power. It comes only with the final manifestation of the Lord, with the final judgment of the wicked, and with the casting of death and Hades into the lake of fire.

No events in the previous history of the Church or the world can possibly exhaust the meaning of the visions seen by the Apostle. He passes on through all intervening time to the instant when sin and Satan shall be for ever crushed, and when they who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb shall be confirmed in their everlasting triumph. Other commentators who have felt this have resorted to an entirely different expedient in order to meet the difficulties which beset them. Instead of referring the Apocalypse to the opening, they have limited it to the closing years of the Christian age. They have supposed that the Seer takes his stand in the far distant future, and that he deals with nothing but what is immediately to precede the winding up of the present dispensation. This view, however, is not less untenable than the one last mentioned. It is inconsistent with any fair interpretation of the Seer's own language. It renders it necessary to understand such phrases as these, "The things which must shortly come to pass," "The time is at hand," "Behold, I come quickly," as meaning, not that, reckoning from the point at which the Seer stood, they would soon happen, but that when they did happen no more than a brief period would be required for the carrying through of all that was involved in them.

Such cannot be the meaning of the words. If one thing connected with the book is clearer than another, it is that St. John wrote to the men of his own day, that he felt for their trials and temptations and sorrows, and that he designed to show them that there was an aspect of their circumstances which ought to

bring them immediate relief. He has to tell not simply of a righteous order of things to be introduced when time ends and eternity begins, but of the prevalence of such an order even now. The prince of darkness is always opposed by the Prince of Light; the enemies of Christ, even when they seem to be victorious, can never touch the true life of the children of God; the righteous are always preserved, and not one of them is lost. These are the lessons which the Apocalypse is designed to teach, and if their consolatory effect is to be experienced they must emerge from the present circumstances of its readers, and not merely from what will be the position of Christians hundreds, or it may be thousands, of years after the date at which the book is written. The indubitable meaning of the Apocalyptic writer is that from the very moment when he speaks the Church may reap the quickening and consolatory fruits of what he says.

Both the views now spoken of must be unhesitatingly dismissed, and the only conclusion left us is that the action of the book covers the whole Christian era from its beginning to its close. At whatever point in the evolution of that era our lot is cast, St. John invites us to behold with him a Divine procedure going on around us which ought to make us keep Christ's works unto the end.

(iv.) Everything contained in the Apocalypse is to be understood symbolically and spiritually. Even did this not appear upon the face of the book as a whole, the writer gives us in one case a clear indication of the principle of interpretation he would have us apply. When speaking of the fate of the two witnesses he says in chap. xi. 8: "And their dead bodies lie in the streets of the great city, which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt," words clearly showing that, in this instance at least, we are not to interpret literally. Apart, however, from these particular words, literal interpretation must be admitted by all to be at least in the main parts of the book impossible. The only question might be, Whether we are to draw any line between the symbolical and the literal, and, if so, where and how? No absolute rule can be laid down. The skill and tact of the interpreter can alone guide him. But this much may be said, that where by far the larger portion of the book is symbolical, the probabilities are in favour of the supposition that all is so.

One thing we are at least entitled to lay down as certain, that different parts of the same figure cannot be interpreted upon different principles; and yet this rule is continually violated by interpreters. What, for example, can be more indefensible than to interpret the "temple" and the "altar" of chap. xi. 1, literally, as if they referred to the temple and altar of Jerusalem

then standing, and in the very same sentence to understand symbolically the words, "measure them that worship therein"? Yet upon this mixture of literal and symbolical interpretation is founded what may, without impropriety, be called the main argument for assigning the book to a date prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. One principle or another ought to be adopted, and to be applied consistently throughout.

To nothing do these remarks apply more than to the interpretation of the numbers of the Apocalypse. The use of numbers, of 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 100's, 1000's, forms one of the most remarkable phenomena with which, in reading the book before us, we have to deal. To connect with numbers thoughts of a kind altogether different from numerical is so strange to us that we have the greatest difficulty in working ourselves into the state of mind which leads to it. That, notwithstanding this, they often have such a force in the Apocalypse can be denied by none; and the old question returns, Is this only occasionally, or is it invariably the case? The same answer as before must be given. To interpret at one time literally and at another time symbolically can lead to nothing but confusion; and unless, therefore, instances can be adduced in which the literal meaning is obviously necessary, it is our manifest duty to abide by the symbolical. What an amount of unprofitable speculation would have been saved to the Church had this principle been adhered to in the interpretation of chap. xx. it is unnecessary to say.

There is, indeed, an idea in many minds that "symbolical" is no more than another name for "wilful" interpretation; that in applying the principle every interpreter is left to the play of his own fancy; and that, when we take it as our guide, we may make anything of Scripture that we please. No idea can be more unphilosophical or more inconsistent with the realities of the case. Symbolical language may be a not less definite exponent of human thought than any other form of speech that we employ. The same symbol may be used, and on the lips of a true teacher will be used, as strictly as any word that literally expresses his idea. The meaning may, in the present instance, be at first more difficult to discover, because in the West, which is so much colder and more phlegmatic than the East, we are accustomed to give much less play to the imagination than is done in regions at once warmer, grander, and more mysterious. But of this we may be assured, that a distinct meaning lies beneath the figures that are employed, and that, even when we may not be able to discover every particular of that meaning, we may at least discover enough to put us in possession of the writer's mind.

Not only in the Apocalypse, but throughout almost all its books, the Bible is full of figures or symbols. The highest truths respecting our Lord Himself are presented to us in such symbols as the Vine, the Bread of Life, the Shepherd of His flock, the Captain of our Salvation. The blessings of the gospel enjoyed by us here; the glory set before us as our reward hereafter; the relation of Christians to their Father in heaven; the influence exercised over them by the Holy Spirit: these and such like truths are almost always symbolically set forth. Between them and the symbols of St. John in the Revelation there is no difference of principle, although the latter are often much more remote from ordinary apprehension than the former.

Thus then we have endeavoured to point out to the reader what may be said in favour of the unity of the book now before him, the interest and importance attaching to its authorship, and the principles upon which he is alike entitled and called upon to interpret it.

Keeping these considerations in view we may now return to the question, What is the meaning of the book? What are we to expect and to look for in it? Did our space permit, it would be an interesting task to dwell for a little on the Gospel of St. John, and to show that in what may be described as the introductory portion of that book, consisting of the first four chapters, the writer prepares us for what he is to set forth in the following and main portion. We should find there traces of all that is to be afterwards unfolded at greater length—Jesus the Son of God, His manifestation of Himself, His struggle as Light with darkness, His preservation from His enemies, and His final victory. It must suffice to say that these things are there, and that precisely the same structure marks the Apocalypse. We have thus a thread to guide us through the apparent labyrinth. For—

(a) We are at the very opening of the book introduced to Christ Himself in His aspect as the Head of His people, of the same nature with them, and of one mind with them. In contrast with the Fourth Gospel, which begins with the Word as God, and then tells us that that Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, the Apocalypse begins with Christ as man. “And I saw,” says the Seer, “in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man” (chap. i. 13), though, as man, raised from the dead, exalted, and glorified.

(b) We are next introduced, in chaps. ii. and iii., to the Universal Church under there presentation given of seven churches of Asia selected for that purpose. These churches are so selected that they present us with a picture of the various elements that make up the Church's life. We see her in herself and in

her relation to the world; in her strength and in her weakness; in her steadfastness and in her declensions; in her prosperity and in her sufferings; in her outward poverty and in her true riches; in the distinction existing between the real and nominal followers of Christ within her borders; in the just indignation of her Supreme Head against the one, and in His leading the other to the full possession of His own triumph in the presence of His Father and their Father, of His God and their God.

In the first three chapters of the book we have thus the subject of which it is to treat set before us. That subject is the Lord Jesus Christ, not so much in the essential and external glory of His divine Sonship as in the glory belonging to Him as the Head of His Church. In other words, the subject of the Apocalypse is the Church in Christ; and the object of the book is to present to us a picture of her trials and struggles in the world until the time when, at His Second Coming, her Lord makes His glory manifest, and completes His victory over all her enemies.

(c) The fourth and fifth chapters, again, are to be regarded a songs of triumph sung even before the contest begins, and conveying to us an assurance of what will be the issue. It will not be forgotten that this is elsewhere the manner of St. John. Before the great contest delineated in the Fourth Gospel, which begins at chap. v., we have the victory of the Redeemer over Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, and the Galilean nobleman. When speaking in his First Epistle of the struggles of Christians with the world, St. John uses the words, "And this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (chap. v. 4). He does not speak of the weapons with which the Christian soldier prepares himself for the battle, but of the "victory" with which, as if it were his armour, he is from the first equipped. In other words, it is St. John's manner of thought to sing his song of triumph before the fight begins, and that is exactly what he does in the fourth and fifth chapters of the Apocalypse.

(d) At chap. vi. the real drama of the book opens, and from that point onward to chap. xviii. 24, we have before us the struggle of light with darkness and of good with evil. That struggle is mainly suggested by the three series of visions known as the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Bowls (the last being improperly spoken of in the Authorised Version as Vials). As compared with the two series which follow it, the first series, that of the Seals, is general, including, as it does, the dealings of God both with the world and the Church. It carries us onward to the end of the present Dispensation, to the time when that Redeemer whom the world scorned and persecuted, and whom even a large portion of the Church denied, will return, "ren-

dering vengeance to them that know not God and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus," but "to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believed" (2 Thess. i. 8, 10).

After a short interval in chap. vii., in which we have two visions of encouragement and consolation, assuring us of the safety of God's children amidst all their trials, we enter upon the second great series of visions, that of the Trumpets. This series is occupied mainly with the judgments of God upon the world, and it, too, after visions of consolation introduced at exactly the same point as in the previous series, brings us, at chap. xi. 18, to the end, to "the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give reward to God's servants the prophets, and to the saints and to them that fear God's name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth." The third series of visions still remains, that of the Bowls. These Bowls, in which the seven last plagues of the wrath of God are filled up, relate mainly to the Church, and in so far as they tell us of judgment, they apply to the degenerate and apostate Church, that great outward Church out of which Christ's true people have to be called, as His true sheep had been called by Him when He was on earth out of the fold of Israel. We have to do, however, in the first instance with the universal Church, the vine of God's planting, the institution charged to carry on the contest with the enemies of God.

These enemies, then, we ought to know, and hence the position of chaps. xii. and xiii. In these chapters the three chief adversaries of the real kingdom of God in the world are described. The first is the dragon or Satan. The second is the power of the world striving to withdraw our thoughts from the unseen and eternal, and to confine them to the seen and temporal. The third is the spirit of a carnal religiousness, like that which so bitterly opposed Jesus in the days of His flesh, and sought to substitute its superficial and hollow forms for the depth, the sincerity, and the freedom of a true life with God. These two last agencies always work together, and help one another against Christian truth. Nothing so welcome to the mere politicians of this world as a faithless Church which will help them to use men for their own selfish ends. Nothing so welcome to a faithless Church as the honours, the riches, and the spoils which the mere politicians of the world have to bestow.

In this part of the Apocalypse, therefore, the passion of the Seer burns with its intensest flame. The degenerate Church is represented under the figure of Babylon. In quick succession the contents of the bowls are poured out upon her, until she is

cast like a great millstone into the sea; and company after company of those who had been enriched with the abundance of her dainties lament with piercing cries her disastrous and irremediable fate. This series, like the two former, brings us to the end.

(e) Then, in chap. xix. and the earlier part of chap. xx., the King of kings and Lord of lords comes forth in His victorious progress, accompanied by the armies of the redeemed, who ride, like Him, upon white horses, and share His triumph.

(f) In the latter part of chap. xx. and in chap. xxi. to chap. xxii. 5, all Christ's enemies are destroyed, and the happiness of the saints is perfected. Upon the millennial bliss of the redeemed, and upon the glory and happiness of the New Jerusalem, it is not possible to dwell. Suffice it to say that we are to behold in the former a figure of the perfected and eternally secured life of those who not only die but rise with Christ; and that in the latter we have a bright and beautiful, as well as elevating, picture of that new condition into which the followers of Jesus are introduced even on this side the grave, and amidst the labours and trials of their present pilgrimage.

Nothing, we are persuaded, has tended more to perplex the interpretation of the Apocalypse than the idea that that holy city which St. John saw "coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband," is intended to represent a glorious state into which the redeemed shall enter sooner or later *after* the close of their earthly pilgrimage, but before they obtain possession of their eternal inheritance. Taking such a view it is impossible to interpret fairly all the expressions of the passage, while it deprives us at the same time of the thought of those sublime privileges which, as we are everywhere taught in Scripture, are not the future only but the present inheritance of God's children.

It is true indeed that even they who are "in" Christ Jesus are still surrounded by a darkness which has no place in the heavenly Jerusalem, that they have still to shed tears which are there washed away, and that they have still to fear that they must meet that death which shall there be swallowed up of victory. Calling these things to mind it can be no matter of surprise that many have difficulty in believing that the brightness and glory of this celestial city can under any point of view represent an earthly scene through which we are thankful if we may but grope our way, "fightings without and fears within." Yet let them remember that the Christian life has two sides, those two which are brought forward so prominently by the Apostle when he speaks of himself and his fellow ministers "as dying,

and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowing, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. v. 1, 9, 10). Let them remember that, if the follower of Christ dies daily with his Lord, he also rises with Him daily, and ascends to the heavenly places and is set down there, his life not maintained amidst the things of earth but "hid with Christ in God." Let these thoughts be ever present to their minds, and they will not have much difficulty in seeing that in the description of the New Jerusalem we have the ideal side of the Christian's position, elevated to its highest point and illuminated with its brightest colouring, but still a side that is true to one aspect of his present state.

One of the great lessons of the Apocalypse, indeed, consists in this, that it unfolds such a bright view, not of a world beyond the grave, but of this present world, when we contemplate it with the eye of faith, and penetrate through the veil of sense to the great springs of spiritual action by which it is really moved. It may be doubted if in this respect there is one single picture of the Apocalypse applicable only to the future inheritance of the saints. What is set forth in its apparent visions of future happiness is rather the present privilege of believers, when they look at what they possess in the light of that Christian revelation in which old things pass away, and all things are made new. If we enter upon the study of it with this feeling, and it is a feeling which, as the spirituality of the Church increases, will more and more commend itself to the Christian mind, the visions of this book will be to us what they were to the Apostle who first beheld them. They will give us fellowship on the loneliest rock of the wide ocean of human life, and they will lighten the darkest spots of earth with a heavenly and unchanging glory.

(g) The Epilogue of the book, beginning at chap. xxii. 6, closes all.

THE END.

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